

American

SEPTEMBER 25 CENTS

MERCURY

How Eisenhower Can Win

THE THREAT OF
EUROPEAN NEUTRALISM

Edward Hunter:

Asia—Defeat by Default

Victor Black: CAN WE BEAT THE
RED LUFTWAFFE?

Peter Viereck: In Defense of Imperialism

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In the **MERCURY's** **OPINION**

How Eisenhower Can Win

IN DECEMBER, 1950, this magazine was invigorated under its present editorship on one assumption: that a twenty-year phase in the American experience was ending and that a new phase was beginning; that the generation which had come to cultural and political power in 1932 was fading and that a new generation would take over; that 1952 would be a pivotal year, a year for new emphases, new attitudes; and that by defining the new attitudes and explaining the new emphases the new MERCURY could justify the effort required to publish it.

We have proceeded also on a further assumption: that there is now a large and growing group of thoughtful, urbane, middle-of-the-road Americans who are capable of some degree of unselfishness and

objectivity. We believe that this group is smart: smart enough to know that popular government, to remain free, must not be subject to the unrestrained will of a majority; smart enough to concede that unrestricted power in the hands of a labor leader is as dangerous as in the hands of an industrialist; smart enough to perceive the lie of "prosperity" bought with inflation; smart enough to understand, with Woodrow Wilson, that free men, to remain free, must concern themselves with the *restraint* of government.

We have believed that this smart, middle group of Americans will now attract most of the thoughtful college graduates; and that this middle group may be able to maintain mature, constitutional government in our country, to beat off the barbarians of our time, and to set good men everywhere to hoping again.

In September, 1952, at the outset of the Presidential campaign, we are, therefore, pleased with developments thus far. We believe that the new movement toward objective moderatism has scored points in both political parties, and that if the thoughtful citizens who support this movement will now redouble their efforts then we can enlist the energies of American youth and win substantial victories during the next four years.

THE FIRST OBJECTIVE of moderatism in 1952, of course, was to discredit the "liberals" who have exploited the Democratic Party, to turn back Trumanism, to halt the New Deal-Fair Deal march toward the unrestrained state. This, in a measure, was accomplished at Chicago within the Democratic Party itself. Television perhaps can be credited with this victory, for most Americans needed only to see the "liberals" in action to desert them. To both see and hear speeches by FDR Junior, Soapy Williams, Blair Moody, and Hubert Humphrey is a sobering experience. And the spectacle of poor "Honest Abe" Harri-man, the Liberal from Sun Valley, gesticulating before the mob — such scenes have not been inflicted on human eyes since the baiting of idiots ceased being a sport.

In giving their nomination to Governor Stevenson the Democratic Party certainly improved on their

choice of 1948. He is a man of dignity and apparently some ability, and under different circumstances might make an adequate President. He has tried hard to avoid the Truman albatross; but despite all the artistry by which his "draft" was executed — and even if he succeeds in derailing the Truman campaign express — the ugly old Truman bird will still be dangling from Stevenson's neck, in full view at every whistle stop.

There may be some scrap of hope in the emergence of Colonel Jake Arvey as the new champion among the Democratic professionals. That Stevenson is his hand-picked protégé and that he tried to jettison Truman as early as 1948 — these are indications that he may be a cut or so above the massive-domed bully boys who have captained the Democratic infantry for so long.

In the Republican Party the fact that Senator Taft lost the nomination was due not so much to himself as to the tired old look of many of his advocates. Moreover, it was the senator's misfortune to make his supreme bid for the Presidency in the very year when it had become apparent to all moderates that the Republican Party must be reorganized in the South, and for this the ancient carpetbagger clubs which had served the Old Guard since Mark Hanna must be destroyed.

Senator Taft is a valiant and complex American, and the voices raised

for him in Chicago are honored ones. But 73-year-old and 77-year-old men do not lead new movements: they cannot attract youth and they cannot convert the Republican Party into a dynamic national force. Senator Taft, in the end, lost because he could not win the support of moderates like Senator Hickenlooper of Iowa; Senator Bridges of New Hampshire; and Senator Knowland of California.

Once the Republican moderates held the balance of power in Chicago, it would perhaps have been better had they nominated one of their own for the Presidency: Knowland or Hickenlooper or Bridges or one of the many capable young Republican governors. Such a nominee might have been able to state the issues more clearly and to make the case against the Democratic Party more effectively. But they had chosen to rally around General Eisenhower who now is to be proved as their spokesman.

Can Eisenhower Win?

WE BELIEVE HE CAN; and we believe he should *if* he develops confidence and political ability during the campaign, and *if* he chooses competent moderates as his advisers. The fact that he is consulting Dr. Walter Judd of Minnesota on foreign policy is a hopeful sign.

To win, the general must first prove himself a successful prosecutor, a role in which he has never

before been cast. He must understand, and then make, the case against the Democratic Party.

The gravest charge against the Democratic Party is that it allowed evil and naïve men within it to convert it into a vehicle which aided the growth of Soviet Russia and the extension of Soviet power. This is a historic fact: from 1933, when it championed the recognition of the Soviet Union, through January, 1950, when Secretary of State Acheson announced that we would not defend South Korea against Communist invasion, the Democratic Party of the United States aided and abetted the growth of Soviet power.

The Democratic Party which, as an agency of freedom, should have been standing guard to restrict the rise of Soviet power, actually gave aid and comfort to the Soviet agency of enslavement.

As this is written, two frustrated men are flying across the Pacific to "try to erect a new bulwark against the Soviet menace." They are Dean Acheson and Dr. Philip Jessup. Neither of these men has the confidence of ten per cent of the American people. They embody the essential failure of the Democratic Party. Any citizen who can read the *Congressional Record*, May 16, 1933, page 3484, knows that Acheson was a *paid advocate* of the Soviet Union — he was hired by Stalin — to promote the recognition of Soviet Russia by this country.

Jessup was an influential member of the Institute of Pacific Relations, and any American who can read the *unanimous* report of the Senate Judiciary Committee knows that the I.P.R.'s principal business in Washington, from 1941 to 1949, was to try to get "enemies of the Soviet Union" fired out of our State Department and, conversely, to try to get "friends of the Soviet Union" promoted.

Governor Stevenson is on record as having said after his nomination that he hadn't "the faintest idea" whether or not he'd fire Acheson if he were elected. The governor is also on record as a character witness for Alger Hiss.

Here is the mother lode for Eisenhower and for his running mate, Senator Nixon, who had to fight the Truman administration as well as Stevenson in order to get Hiss prosecuted. There is not a family in America whose living standard has not been reduced by the present necessary rearmament effort. And what are we arming against? Against the threat of a once-weak bear now grown strong through having been nurtured by agents of the Democratic Party.

Every able young man in America must now forfeit two years of his life learning to march in step. Why? Because Mr. Acheson's former clients and Doctor Jessup's good friends are bent upon enslaving the world.

If Eisenhower is to win, he'll

present his case against the Democratic Party in terms of personalities.

To aid the general in presenting his case, THE MERCURY has sold more than a million reprints of our article "Freedom's Case Against Dean Acheson." This is a scholarly documentation of Acheson's record from the day that he was first retained by the Soviet Union down to the present. We have a few more of these reprints which we expect to make available.

THE SECOND CHARGE against the Democratic Party relates to the China-Korean tragedy. This is part of the first charge: Acheson and the other promoters of Soviet expansionism proved even more effective in Asia than in Europe. Eisenhower, with the advice of Doctor Judd, should be able to convert this into his sharpest campaign instrument.

Most literate Americans already have some understanding of the tragedy in Asia, but General Eisenhower can help restore some of our national dignity and self-respect if he will point out that the whole tragedy was foreseen by competent American scholars at least fifty years ago. Our nation has committed so many blunders in foreign policy that the average citizen is apt to conclude that we simply can't produce men who can contemplate the lessons of history and then "see" clearly into the future. But this isn't true. Through all the stages of our devel-

opment America has produced men with remarkable perspicacity, but during the last forty years we have not been able to bring them to power.

For those who'd like reassurance on this point we recommend a re-reading of *The Education of Henry Adams*. Adams was an adviser to Theodore Roosevelt, and on March 22, 1903, he wrote:

My statesmanship is still all in China, where the last struggle for power is to come. China is bound to go to pieces, and every year is a long step to the bad. The only country now on the spot is Russia, and if Russia organizes China as an economical power, the little drama of history will end in the overthrow of our clumsy Western civilization. We never can compete with Asia, and Chinese coal and labor, organized by a Siberian system. In that event I allow until 1950 to run our race out.

Our failure to prevent Russian domination of Asia has been no failure of scholarship but of leadership. Asia was the first objective of the Soviet Union, and this was understood clearly by Acheson and Jessup and Hiss and their entire clique in our government.

Communism is realizing its objectives in Asia through the assistance of American knaves as well as American fools, and Eisenhower can win and become a successful President only if he prosecutes them both.

WHEN EISENHOWER BEGINS presenting these first two charges, the "liberal" characters of the Americans for Democratic Action who are directing Stevenson's campaign will attempt to catch the general in the clumsiest of all political traps. Using some of the effete muddleheads like the Alsop brothers, they will insist that he must "in honesty, repudiate McCarthy."

This is a trap which Republicans have been falling into now for twenty years. It's political stupidity. No clever politician ever discusses the one horse which he and his party may have stolen; he discusses the many horses which his opposition has stolen. Did Franklin Roosevelt ever repudiate anybody who showed signs of voting for him? In every race he was photographed with his arms draped around Boss Hague or Boss Pendergast or Boss Crump, while Communists slept in the White House in Lincoln's bed. Yet during all this he had the Republicans repudiating one another.

The merits or demerits of McCarthyism are not for Eisenhower to discuss. Let him discuss McCarthy's most furious attackers. Mr. Harriman at Chicago referred to McCarthy as "that horrid man who brought Un-Americanism to this country." The confusion here is apparent. McCarthy didn't bring it here.

In 1944 one form of Un-Americanism came to this country in the

person of Vladimir Rogov, a Soviet secret agent who is now Russia's top hatchet man in the Orient. Mr. Rogov established himself in a Washington Hotel where various members of the Acheson-Lattimore-Hiss cabal sought him out either to confer or conspire with him.

And where was McCarthy? He was out in the Pacific with the Marines. Let's agree with his critics that he might have been engaged in all sorts of conspiracy, such as how to get himself elected to the Senate—but he was also an active part of a conspiracy to defeat our enemies.

We prefer McCarthy's brand of conspiracy to the Lattimore-Hiss brand. McCarthy didn't bring Un-Americanism to this country; it was here before he was ever heard of. Harriman is confusing the disease, which is a national scandal, with one of the more rambunctious efforts to root it out.

If Eisenhower attempts to repudiate McCarthy, he will only assist those tacticians who are plotting his defeat.

OTHER MOVES which Eisenhower should make to win include these:

He should anticipate the "prosperity" claims of his opposition, and attack the Democratic Party for undermining the standard of living of every American family. Among the informed moderates whom Eisenhower must attract to win, there is

little confusion on this point. Most every middle-class American understands that he is suffering from a process of gradual and steady impoverishment.

The first of all human rights to be guaranteed by free government is the right to accumulate, to own property. Any government which allows the value of its bonds or of its currency to deteriorate is breaking faith with its people.

Let Eisenhower hold up a war bond dated 1941 at every whistle stop. Let him read what the government of the United States, in 1941, promised that that bond would be worth in 1951. Then let him disclose what the bond is really worth. That's the measure of how the Democratic Party has kept faith with its "common men."

Let Eisenhower hold up war bonds dated 1952 at every whistle stop. Let him read what the government of the United States promises this bond to be worth in 1962. Then let him covenant to make this promise good.

This year, for the first time, Eisenhower has what is perhaps his greatest opportunity for service: he can bring thousands of young southerners into the Republican Party; he can make the Republican Party an effective reality in every southern state. If he'll make a fighting campaign he can hope to carry at least four southern states: Virginia, North Carolina, Texas, and Florida.

When Eisenhower invades the South he will find that he has the support of good newspapers like the Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, the Birmingham *News*, the Montgomery *Advertiser*, and the Dallas *News*. And he'll find more than 200,000 copies of a MERCURY reprint, "Why a Southerner Should Vote Republican," an article which has been carried in full to date by 157 southern newspapers.

Another snare being laid for Eisenhower is the one by which his enemies hope that they can keep him so busy discussing something called FEPC that he will not have time to prosecute his case. It seems unlikely that he will fall for this one: nothing yet has earned him as much respect as his forthright statement in opposition to FEPC.

FEPC is a fraud, devised by the "liberals" for publicity purposes. It has failed repeatedly to pass the Congress for one reason: it is an evil measure, and many members of Congress who have managed to get themselves on record in favor of it know that it is evil.

FEPC is evil because at a time

when the national need is to restrain the federal government, FEPC proposes, in the name of civil rights, a vast extension of the power of the federal government.

Surely knowledgeable Americans are now aware of most of the tricks by which total government is inflicted on a free people: all extensions of power are disguised as pious measures for the public welfare.

Eisenhower can wreck his enemies and turn the FEPC fraud to his advantage. Let him stand up and denounce it for what it is.

FOR NINE MONTHS now we have looked hopefully to the candidacy of General Eisenhower. The Democratic Party has degenerated into a community of selfish interest: it is controlled now by all the little self-seeking groups who want to extend the power of the Government of the United States for their own benefit.

Let Eisenhower now appeal to the unselfish heart of America; let him define his crusade as one to restrain the federal government in the name of freedom; and we believe he'll win — and perform his finest service.

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Neutralism and the Defense of Europe: 1

Raymond Aron

ALLIES—NOT SATELLITES!

Europe needs not only the arms with which to resist Soviet aggression, but also the will. Neutralism represents the failure of that will, and springs from the European's sense of his own helplessness and impotence. Looking at America with the eyes of a European, Raymond Aron, one of France's best known political writers, sees in Europe's recovery of its strength the only way to avoid the twin dangers of collaborationist subservience and neutralist rejection. In our second article, Peter Meyer, who recently returned from abroad, asserts that the neutralists are a greater menace to the security of Western Europe than its native Communists. Both writers conclude that only a Europe confident of its own strength can join with the United States in defense of the free world.

SINCE THE END of the war, the countries of continental Europe have enjoyed the protection, the material aid, and the financial assistance of the United States. American strength and determination have been their only defense against a Russian invasion. Today they still look to the other side of the Atlantic for arms, and for part of the dollars with which to cover their essential purchases in the dollar area. But the disproportion in strength between the European countries and the United States is bound to make itself

felt in their day-to-day relations, and inevitably gives rise to reactions which are complex and sometimes contradictory.

We can disregard the Communists, whose feverish anti-Americanism is only the counterpart of their complete subservience to the Soviet Union. Amongst the non-Communists, what are the different attitudes? The first, of which the so-called neutralists are the typical representatives, consists in denying our dependence, in declaring that Europeans have it in their power to

shake off the so-called domination of America, and that the danger of war would be reduced, if not removed altogether, if the Europeans cut themselves loose from their powerful protector. In its extreme form, this attitude is to be found especially in France, and above all amongst the French intellectuals.

It is easy enough on paper to counter the arguments by which its supporters try to justify this attitude. For example, neutralism assumes that in peace time, or in what is called the cold war, the Soviet Union would show less hostility toward Europeans if they declared themselves neutrals. But this idea rests on a wrong interpretation of Soviet psychology and diplomacy. The Stalinists count as enemies all those who do not accept without reservation their own doctrine. Sometimes they are content with a declaration of neutrality, when their aim is to break up a coalition which they dislike; but once they have achieved this first objective, their new aim will become to drive the Americans out of the old continent, so that left to themselves, the Europeans will be easily absorbed into the Russian sphere.

This school of thought, because it hopes to break our ties with the United States, likes to picture a Soviet Union strictly on the defensive, disturbed by the preparations which the Americans are mak-

ing, and wishing only to assure its own security. But this picture has no relation to the facts. It is enough to remember the diplomacy of the Soviet Union between 1943 and 1947, when the Western powers were making every effort to collaborate with Russia, to understand the misconception on which the neutralist attitude is based. As for what we might expect if the worst happened and war broke out, it is difficult to feel optimistic. The Europeans, in all probability, would be involved in the conflict, whether they had declared themselves "neutrals" or not. The only difference would be that, deprived of arms and unprepared for the challenge, they would be doomed to occupation, of which the experience of Eastern Europe has shown us the horrors.

At the other extreme we find the attitude of the new collaborators, of those who accept American leadership — just as in the past they accepted the supremacy of the Third Reich. Sometimes, unfortunately, they are the same people. There are institutes for the study of American affairs which have as their directors men who, at one time, were directors of institutes for the study of Franco-German affairs. Certainly the reasons are quite different, and the reorientation is an artificial result of political circumstances. But the question is one of a psychological attitude. To accept passively the

decisions of American policy is as deplorable as to pretend to isolated independence — which means, simply, impotence.

SOMEWHERE between these two extremes, obviously, there is a way in which Europeans can make good use of the power and the help which America can provide. But let us make no mistake about it, each one of us is tempted time and again by the attitude both of the neutralist and of the collaborator. Each of us makes in turn the mistakes, first of one, and then of the other. At one moment, so as to recover our self-esteem, so as not to feel inferior because of the feeling of subservience to the Americans, we are tempted to speak ill of our Allies, to denounce their "barbarity," and to trumpet abroad the superiority of our own culture. At another, conscious of our own weakness, and of our dependence on financial and military aid, we fall into the other extreme and resign ourselves, with disguised bitterness, to the will of America. With regard to the United States, each European carries within himself a neutralist and a collaborator. And nothing irritates the Americans more than this oscillation between the two attitudes, this alternation of exaggerated revolt and exaggerated submission.

What, then, should we aim at? The answer is simple: a firm recognition of solidarity, frankness, and the

will to restore to Europe as far as possible and as fast as possible the right degree of freedom of action. The Americans, like every other people, have their defects and their qualities; one might in fact say they have the defects of their qualities. A young and optimistic people, they have a tendency to be impulsive; sometimes they reverse their policy unexpectedly. Their policy toward Germany, which has gone from the non-fraternization of 1945 to the alliance in fact of today, has been altered, not gradually, but by bounds, each one being determined by some Soviet initiative. The United States has moved in scarcely a generation from a position of almost complete indifference to world affairs to one where, to an unparalleled extent, they hold in their hands the fate of the free world, from Tokyo to Paris. They have made mistakes, and they will make others. The tradition of an unquestioning anti-imperialism has led them to underestimate the dangers of a precipitate retreat by the Europeans which would leave a gap to be quickly filled by Communism. They put their trust, during the war, in the Soviet Union, which took advantage of the fact to enslave 100,000,000 Europeans. The decisions of the State Department are often paralyzed and distorted by the movement of public opinion, or by the violence of the opposition. The United States has not yet found a

policy for Asia which would avoid at the same time the loss of the last remaining positions of the West on the continent, and involvement in a ruinous war.

I could continue this catalogue. But let us take the criticisms one by one: have the Europeans found the secret of containing the Soviet Union without running risks, of negotiating with Russia without agreeing to crippling concessions? The truth is that with regard to most of the problems of diplomacy, the different opinions between which statesmen hesitate find expression in each of the countries of the Atlantic alliance. There are plenty of opponents of Chiang Kai-shek in the United States, and, if the Europeans held the responsibility for Western strategy, would they give up Formosa to the Chinese Communists without compensation and without delay?

We are right to criticize the United States when we think they are making mistakes; it is the duty of friends and of allies. If we are not always listened to, that is explained partly by the fact that he who is strongest is always inclined to think himself the most intelligent, but also by the complexity of the situation and by the doubts which men of good faith have difficulty in overcoming when they have to recommend a solution or a decision. The worst mistake which we Europeans make — and make too often — is to

hide a part of what is in our thoughts.

For example, the Americans are convinced that integration or unification is essential for the well-being of the old continent. The Europeans think that fundamentally the Americans are right; but they also think that this mysterious integration would not be able, within the space of a few years, to solve the economic problems with which the old continent is wrestling, and they are not sure that supranational institutions would produce a decisive advance toward the defensive organization of the old continent. Too often the Europeans, in the hope of winning the good opinion of their protector, compete with each other in the warmth of their declarations on the urgent need for unity — without letting their actions give practical meaning to their words. Soon the moment comes when the disproportion between words and actions becomes obvious to everyone, and when the Americans get the impression that they have been misled and attribute to ill will something which in fact is due to real and all but insuperable difficulties.

HOW CAN WE put an end to these clumsy reactions to the influence of America? In the long run I see only one hope: when Europe regains her strength and self-confidence, when she feels herself less dependent on the goodwill of America, frankness will return along with

a sense of equality, and American leadership, instead of arousing a mixture of ill feeling and subservience, will be accepted in principle because it is the necessary result of existing facts, and will be the subject of discussion on each occasion, as is right amongst friends.

To reach this state of affairs it is also essential that the Europeans should not get used to the idea of themselves as people entitled to permanent assistance. The danger is that they will come in the end to find it normal that their coffers should be refilled by American aid.

Perhaps one day that aid will not be forthcoming. Even if it does come, it is very bad for the morale of a nation to count on foreign aid. And so the firmest supporters of the Atlantic alliance, the most sincere friends of the United States, those who urge Europeans to accept with open hearts the idea of solidarity between the old world and the new, are also those we urge to overcome their weakness, their disorder, their dependence, so that at last the United States may have in Europe, as they themselves would wish, not satellites, not clients, but allies.

Neutralism and the Defense of Europe: 2

Peter Meyer

THE NEUTRALIST THREAT

IN WESTERN EUROPE in 1952 the native Communists are no longer the chief obstacle to building an adequate defense against Soviet conquest. That part is now played by the neutralists. What makes neutralism dangerous, of course, is the threat of Soviet conquest. But Western Europe would perhaps be more secure without its neutralists than without its Communists.

The influence of Communism is evidently on the wane. Everywhere, the Communist ticket is losing votes, the Communist press is losing readers, and the Communist Party is losing members. What is more important, the Communist parties in France and Italy cannot rally mass support for their actions. Their hysterical attempt to stop the flow of American war material to Europe by strikes and sabotage ended in dismal failure. So did the attempted demonstrations against such visiting NATO leaders as Eisenhower, Ridgway, and Acheson. A long-prepared

campaign against General Ridgway in France yielded little more than a few chalked inscriptions in the Paris subway and on suburban walls. Their stereotyped and unimaginative character, in a country whose people are famed for their *esprit*, already indicated that the campaign expressed not so much a genuine popular mood as the plodding efforts of a few dogged activists. In the end, less than 10,000 people showed up for the long-heralded demonstration. The hard core of party stalwarts fought their battle with the police; but the masses, including the mass of organized Communists, stayed at home.

When the French government, with palpitating heart, ventured to arrest Jacques Duclos, the Communist Party thundered out a call for a general protest strike. But the result was ignominious. Subway trains, buses, streetcars, taxis, and rail traffic moved as usual; the miners went down to the pits; the shops

were open for business; and factory chimneys, with very few exceptions, continued to pour forth smoke. The expected doomsday had failed to materialize.

The French Communist Party, though polling a quarter of the nation's votes and dominating its biggest labor unions, was found incapable of conducting a militant action. Matters turned out much the same in Italy, although the Communist vote in the communal elections continued to increase.

IN EUROPE as in America, many I pundits had been preaching that defense measures against fifth-column activities would "only strengthen" the Communist movement. They were listened to respectfully. But now the French government suppressed the Communist rioters, arrested the acting party leader, fired party sympathizers from the Paris police force, and jailed Communist spies in Toulon and other places.

The Italian parliament adopted a law against subversive activities which was aimed at Communists as well as fascists.

Sweden tried Communist spies in open court and adopted a drastic law against espionage and sabotage.

A Swiss court sent a Communist editor to jail for calumniating the federal government.

The Communists of Western Europe tried to strike back — and failed. More and more, they found

themselves isolated. Terrorized non-Communist minorities in Communist-dominated factories and villages summoned up their courage; the waverers began to leave in droves; the followers stopped obeying orders; and the faithful were bewildered. Party-line gyrations bewildered them still more. Orders from Moscow decreed even greater "militancy" and "independent action" — only to be followed a few weeks later by a retreat "back to the masses" and to a united front with the neutralists. Everybody recanted and re-recanted, but the people continued to ignore Communist appeals. The Communist fifth columns are still dangerous and will remain so as long as Stalin stands *ante portas*. But the myth of their invincibility has been exploded.

Except for a hardbitten minority, the European Communists and their sympathizers don't seem especially eager to die — or even demonstrate — for Stalin. Stalin, however, has more formidable soldiers than his agents and dupes in the democratic world. The fifth column by itself can be dealt with, but what about those other four columns, deployed so uncomfortably near along the Elbe and Danube? Are people aware of what would happen to them if the Soviets should occupy Europe? Yes. And are they ready to defend themselves? No. People know what their fate would be under Soviet rule, and yet they are re-

luctant to do anything about defending themselves. Such is the paradox of European neutralism.

In non-Communist circles on the European continent, you do not encounter very many illusions about what life is like under the Soviets.* The Iron Curtain is too near and there are too many former soldiers, military deserters, ex-prisoners of war, deportees, and refugees to testify to the truth. In America it was possible to describe the Magadan concentration camps in Siberia as pioneer communities; to try to pass off the uranium mines in Saxony and Czechoslovakia in the same way to Europeans is pretty hopeless. Too many people have been in Russia or satellite countries to believe in Soviet "economic democracy"; too many have watched the fall of Czechoslovakia and the Sovietization of East Germany to think "people's democracy" anything but a circumlocution for totalitarian dictatorship. Ask any intelligent non-Communist European what he expects to happen to him if the Russians should occupy his country, and he will answer with little hesitation: I shall be shot or sent to a concentration camp. The incessant purges carried on behind the Iron Curtain have even dimmed

the hopes of those who thought to save their skins by passive conformity or opportune conversion. The more intelligent among them now know that it would not save them from ultimate "liquidation."

UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, it would be logical to expect that everybody should be thinking only about how to defend Europe from Communist invasion. In reality, however, the main concern of many is how to *avoid* defending Europe.

Many Europeans are proud of what they call their "calm" and "sanity" as compared with American "hysteria." Americans, they tell you, who are so far away, prate incessantly about war, war, war; whereas we who are in the front line don't even think about it.

Yes, they don't like to speak or even think about it. But their apparent calm is born not of a sense of security but of overwhelming anxiety, an anxiety they cannot afford to acknowledge even to themselves. It resembles the paralyzed calm of a rabbit before a staring serpent. And their apparent optimism is the optimism of a man who won't admit there are dangerous prowlers in the neighborhood because he would have to buy a gun.

One can understand the anxiety of Europeans. They have suffered, starved, and died in two world wars. At the end of the second, they had expected at long last to enjoy

* I say "on the continent" because some Bevanite leaders of the British Labor Party espouse a different, more deluded brand of neutralism. They still believe that Russia is in some sort "progressive," having a truly "socialist system," even if distorted by dictatorship and backwardness.

a reasonable security, and now they are menaced again. Their standards of living are still low, their hope of social reforms frustrated, and new sacrifices for the common defense are demanded of them. And although there is a reasonable expectation that such sacrifices will avert war, nobody can promise it with certainty. In spite of all, the war may come, and the suffering would be unimaginable. . . . So the popular mood, expressed in the French *Je m'en fous* (to hell with it) and the German *Ohne mich* (count me out), is only too understandable.

BUT the Soviet threat cannot be expected to vanish simply because it is ignored. The refusal to build a strong defense is a constant invitation to Russia to attack. Moreover, Europe cannot avoid the suffering of war even if it refuses to fight in its own defense. It is clear that the Russians, once having successfully occupied it, would not only enslave the population and exterminate all resisting elements, but would mobilize the rest of the population for a Soviet war against the free world — Europe would be a source not only of slave labor, but also of cannon fodder.

The European intelligentsia should know these truths and say them. Instead, many of them preach neutralist evasions. And politicians who know better, often flatter neutralist moods to enhance their popularity.

Why, according to the neutralist, is it foolish to build up Europe's defenses? Two contradictory reasons are given, and usually by the same person. The first is that Russia is too weak; the second, that it is too — strong! Russia is weak and therefore won't attack, whether the West arms or not. Russia is strong and therefore can't be stopped; arming ourselves will only provoke her.

Why is Russia weak? Because it produces only 30 million tons of steel, against 40 million in the rest of Europe and more than 100 million in the United States. But didn't Hitler start a war and almost win it with a much smaller quantity of German steel production? And can't Stalin attain a 70-million-ton output if he overruns Western Europe?

Yes, but he is . . . more reasonable than Hitler. And he isn't forced to go to war. Russia is so rich she has everything she needs, she doesn't have to expand. . . .

Why then did she seize the satellite countries?

Well, she was just protecting her borders.

Against whom, when the United States demobilized and went all out for appeasement? Did anybody threaten Russia at that time?

Well, no, of course not, but the Russians, you know, have often been invaded in the past, they tend to be apprehensive, they have an anxiety neurosis. . . .

Then Stalin isn't a great deal more

reasonable than Hitler, is he? He might attack at a propitious moment, forgetting to tot up the comparative tonnage of steel production, and hoping to overcome his disadvantage in material by what he can amass through conquest.

Oh yes, that's why you shouldn't provoke him, as I told you.

But doesn't experience show that weakness rather than strength provokes dictatorial regimes to aggression?

And then you are about to tick off a long list of historical precedents in support of your point when the discussion suddenly shifts its ground. Your opponent, you see, is also for strength, no need to argue with him about that, only he's for another kind of strength — economic strength. You must improve economic conditions, and let rearmament go. That, and that alone, will make you secure. Butter, not guns, is the right slogan.

You don't mean to deny that an improvement in economic conditions is helpful and necessary. But what amount of butter will stop a tank? Didn't Czechoslovakia — and even the Balkan and Baltic countries, for that matter — have higher standards of living than Russia? And isn't recorded history full of cases of primitive and hungry tribes overrunning ancient empires enjoying much higher living and cultural standards?

Oh yes, but the barbarians were tamed and transformed by the in-

fluence of the older civilizations they conquered. Perhaps Russia would also be transformed and democratized if . . .

If it conquers Europe? Do you want to be occupied, bend to the totalitarian yoke, and suffer wholesale extermination, in the uncertain expectation of being liberated at some future date by a democratic transformation of Communism?

At this point your opponent asks you the inevitable question: And what about the Negroes in the South?

Because, after all, Europe can be defended only in alliance with America. If Russia loses, America will win. But is America really so much better than Russia?

YOU CAN'T FOOL YOUR OPPONENT. He knows everything about America. He knows that Negroes in New York are barred from riding in the same buses and trains with white gentlemen. He knows that there are towns which no Jews may ever enter — no use denying it, he saw it himself in a film called *Gentlemen's Agreement*. He knows that America lacks all culture, or at least real culture, and that Americans are — oversexed! He also knows that you get tossed in jail directly you voice an unpopular opinion.*

** I haven't dreamed these things up. They were all said to me in just such words, and by people who despised and feared Communism. A relative of my wife, a conservative businessman, was reluctant to lend me an old family photograph, taken in Russia many years before the revolution;*

You readily agree that segregation of the races in public conveyances is undemocratic, even if practiced only in the South and not at all in New York. You share your opponent's revulsion against racially restricted places, even if these places are private hotels or beaches and not entire cities; and, moreover, there are state laws against such practices. You point out that one can and does fight for improvement, that the situation is steadily improving even if not as fast as one might wish, and that, after all, a huge gulf divides the failings of democracy from the slavery of Soviet totalitarianism.

To little avail. European neutralists have developed astonishing double standards for evaluating the same American and European phenomena. In a serious, conservative, staunchly anti-Communist Swiss newspaper, you read a dispatch from Washington deploring the rampant hysteria and total lack of civil liberties, expressed in the fact that Owen Lattimore was obliged to answer the questions of a congressional committee. And then you turn the page and find a report about a Swiss court sentencing a Communist to thirteen months in jail for having written an article accusing the Swiss government of selling out Swiss neutrality. When you diffidently point out in conver-

the picture bore the photographer's name, naturally in Russian letters, and everybody present feared that I might be arrested should I arrive in America with this incriminating document in my possession.

sation that it would be impossible in the "hysteria-ridden" United States to convict anyone on such grounds, there is only an embarrassed silence. *Quod licet bovi, non licet Iovi.* . . .

THERE ARE many reasons for these misapprehensions about America. One is a lack of balanced information. European intellectuals read the American literature of social protest and jump to the conclusion that *Tobacco Road* and *Grapes of Wrath* describe conditions generally prevailing in the country. Newspapers report lynchings, riots, real or imaginary attacks on civil liberties, and register the protests of American civil libertarians; so Europeans conclude that America is on the way to fascism.

More balanced information would certainly help. But I doubt if it would make any dent on confirmed neutralists. People believe what they want to believe, and neutralists want to believe that America is little better than Russia in order to wash their hands of the whole business. Why fight Soviet tyranny in order to get an American dictatorship? (Why die for Danzig?)

There is certainly enough to be criticized in American policies. Nobody can in good conscience defend postwar disarmament and appeasement — though very few people in Europe (as in America) can claim to have registered their objections at

the time. The Morgenthau plan was certainly no piece of great wisdom. We cannot escape the reproach of having taught a nation to regard rearmament as a crime, and then called it to the colors as a matter of patriotic duty. There are many such criticisms to be made and we should accept them gracefully. But the criticism should be that of friends fighting in a common cause. Whereas neutralist criticism is a rationalization of desertion.

IT is a disingenuous criticism. The neutralist knows very well that his life and liberty would be forfeit if the United States should turn its back on Europe — which is why the selfsame people who loudly object to American world-wide meddling live in fear and trembling that we might go back to isolationism. I asked the man who complained for hours about the American “occupation” if he really wanted the “Amis” to go home, and he answered with a startled no. Shortly after, he apprehensively inquired whether Senator Taft, if elected President, would recall the U. S. divisions to the States.

A Swiss businessman advocated in a conversation with me the idea of a European Union; such a union would be neutral as between Russia and the United States. Let America and the Soviets fight it out in Asia, he argued, and leave us be. It was preposterous to assume that Europe could stay out of a world-wide

struggle, but, for the sake of argument, I admitted the possibility and asked him simply: If Russia defeats America, don't you think that she will swallow you too?

The man was aghast and stared at me. Then he laughed uproariously: What nonsense! America is so strong! It can't be beaten! It will win!

Now I understood. America will win — but *ohne mich*. I suddenly remembered an editorial I had read in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in 1938, which summed up the policy of the appeasement of Hitler in this prayer: *Heiliger Florian, schütze mein Haus und zünd' beim Nachbarn an!* (Dear St. Florian, spare my house and set my neighbor's afire!) The journal predicted that appeasement wouldn't work with Hitler. It didn't. Nor will it work with Stalin.

The neutralist wants to sit it out. No use telling him it is immoral. His answer is: Europe has suffered enough. But we can still persuade him that if he means to sit it out, he has chosen the wrong continent, and, I am afraid, the wrong planet.

The neutralist knows that he lives in mortal danger, but refuses to face the danger. He knows that in the end he must take sides, but wishes to evade the choice. He knows in his heart that the victory of Communism would destroy him and everything he holds dear, and that democracy lets him live and offers hope of improvement, but he keeps saying that the difference is not important.

He argues that the united free world is too weak to oppose Russia — and that America is strong enough to protect the status quo without any help from him. He reproaches America for its meddling — and is scared to death of its pulling out of Europe. He considers Russia too weak to attack a disarmed Europe — and considers her too strong to be stopped by any amount of arms and concerted action. He dreams of uniting Europe in order to oppose American policies — and opposes every step toward unification for fear of offending Stalin. He would prefer the United States and Russia to fight it out in Asia — and is afraid of America getting too involved in Asia to come to his help should Russia attack in Europe.

He wants American economic help; but resents the necessity of having to accept it. He counsels his own country to be realistic and consult its own interests; and in the next breath admonishes America to be idealistic and provide aid with “no strings attached.” He justifies Soviet and Chinese aggression on the grounds that these countries are poor and the West rich; at the same time that he tries to convince himself and others that only an improvement in economic conditions in the West can prevent Soviet aggression. He preaches that the world is in the throes of revolution; and wants to maintain the status quo.

He has neither plan, program, nor a real answer to any problem; his policy is one of closing his eyes to realities, evading problems, and feeling superior. He is strong when and where anxiety, insecurity, and passivity prevail; his strength is the weakness of Europe.

YOU CANNOT REASON neutralism away. As long as there is paralyzing fear, there will be neutralism. But every advance toward European unity, every improvement in the standard of living, every step toward greater military security helps to isolate the apostles of impotence.

Je m'en fous and *Ohne mich* are not a program, even if served with all the trimmings of sophisticated neutralism. The present world-wide conflict cannot be fought without the German people; their ultimate choice is only between fighting as equal partners of the democracies, or as slaves of Soviet totalitarianism. And if the French continue to delude themselves, there might come a day when *Je m'en fous* would be a treasonable statement, according to paragraph 58 of the Soviet penal code.

The people of Europe will understand this truth when they are offered a viable alternative: a united Europe, strong economically and militarily, and working together as an equal with the rest of the free world.

Letter from Colombia

Sinners, Saints, and Civil War

Peter Schmid

BOGOTÁ
COLOMBIA is a paradoxical country. I arrived in Bogotá during Passion Week, and nowhere else have I seen such a display of religious fervor as took place inside the town's dark and serene baroque churches. It took a small miracle even to get into one of them; so dense were the crowds that policemen with helmets and rifles were needed to keep them back from the church doors. Endless queues lined the aisles leading to the confessionals, for one must be pure in heart to take part in the Easter celebration. The estrangement of modern man from God, apparent everywhere else in the world, obvi-

ously stops at the borders of Colombia.

"Spiritually, we are still living in the Middle Ages," I was told by Alvaro Gomez, the son of the President and editor of the conservative newspaper, *El Siglo*; day in, day out, he writes venomous articles attacking liberals, Protestants, and other enemies of the church's authority. His remark was not uttered shamefacedly, but with an accent of pride: we still keep our faith; unlike the rest of the world, we have not passed into an era of decadence. In Colombia, modern intellectual tendencies like existentialism are so many distant and incomprehensible mutterings. Even the doctrines of such important modern Catholic thinkers as Jacques Maritain receive only a kind of theoretical acknowledgment.

"The basis of our spiritual life," continued Alvaro, "is scholasticism, and especially the scholasticism of

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Peter Schmid, the well-known Swiss correspondent and former Weltwoche editor, has spent the last few years traveling in Europe and Asia. At present he is touring South and Central America. Mr. Schmid will be appearing regularly in future issues of THE AMERICAN MERCURY.

Saint Thomas." The complete unity of the religious and secular orders — which Spain has tried to realize and failed, because of her proximity to Europe — is a reality in Colombia. Colombia is a kind of super-Spain where the essence of Hispanism has been preserved stronger and purer than in the mother country. In Andalusia, the *Semana Santa* is now a sort of religious carnival, its ceremonial and tragic trappings barely disguising the underlying hectic and secular vitality. In Colombia, processions with cross and mater dolorosa are still a serious affair. The black-hooded men groaning under their heavy burden obviously still suffer agonies; these repentants experience unfeigned joy when the sharp edges of the wooden crosses make their shoulders bleed in holy religion's cause.

AT THE HEIGHT of the excitement, however, something else, something very profane, was going on, which is why I call Colombia a paradoxical country. We learned about it after the holidays were over, when the newspapers reported that more than \$250,000 worth of property had been stolen during the Holy Week. The fact that most people had spent hours and hours in confessionals and in front of altars had presented Colombia's thieves — who play a very important part in Bogotá's public life — with an unequaled opportunity.

Stealing, in Colombia, is more than just a vice of the poor. It is almost a national pastime, enjoyed equally by all members of society, aristocrats as well as proletarians. A British diplomat told me that before receptions can be held at the embassy, anything smaller than a grandfather clock has to be locked up; otherwise it is certain to disappear. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommends similar precautions for all press conferences, and as an added precaution guests are allotted one glass of whiskey only — they must keep their wits about them. During the famous riots of April 9, 1948, when suburban mobs stormed the center of the city, burning private homes and looting stores, even the members of the social elite sent their servants out to plunder. Nor did they hesitate to profit personally from the orgy of looting; next day they snapped up small refrigerators for a mere \$7 and big ones for \$3.50 (because they were harder to dispose of).

This national pastime has gone to enormous lengths in the last few years. In Bogotá today it is risky to leave one's house even for a short period of time. The Colombian thieves are terrifyingly systematic, stealing not only valuable objects, but everything down to the lingerie of the lady of the house. Bogotá, to the foreign tourist, is a mystifying labyrinth, as there are no street signs — they would be stolen just

as soon as they were erected. Strolling in the dark is dangerous — you might suddenly vanish down a manhole whose lid has been purloined. Even public monuments are no longer safe from the thieves; how, then, is a humble citizen to find protection! Even the Scotland Yard specialists the government sent for to train the Colombian police were not proof against the enterprising thieves — their suitcases disappeared during their first half-hour on Colombian soil.

ARE SUCH THINGS POSSIBLE? you ask. Doesn't the country have a police force? There are police in Bogotá. But, a Colombian friend told me, the police are not primarily interested in protecting the life and property of the ordinary citizen. Their first duty is to protect the government from its enemies. So thieves go unmolested, for thieves as a class are no enemies of the state. If an ordinary citizen comes home to find his apartment thoroughly cleaned out, the police must have a photograph of the thieves before they consent to do anything. One of my friends, after her silver had been stolen one night, very correctly suspected the lover of her maid. The guardians of the law promised to catch him — if the lady would lend them her car to do the catching in. She did, and the boy was caught. The silver had already been melted down, but at least the offender

would be punished. This, however, said the police, would necessitate a small sacrifice on the part of the victim: if the lady would pay five pesos (\$2) a day for the thief's room and board, they were perfectly willing to lock him up. When the lady refused, the thief was released.

When I visited Bogotá's police training school, where a famous politician of the opposition was imprisoned, a friendly young policeman led me to the politician's cell. On the way, he asked me whether I could recommend a good lawyer in Bogotá to him. I was rather taken aback, and asked him why he wanted a lawyer. One of his colleagues, he said, had stolen his pistol, and the only way for him to get it back was to go to court!

How does it happen that Colombia is both so devout and so thievish at the same time? I have discussed this apparent contradiction with Europeans settled here a long time. Some claim that Colombia's piety is little more than an outward show. But this, to me, seemed rather a superficial explanation. There are many other things about this country that puzzle one by their inexplicability. If, for instance, you hand a photograph to a Colombian upside down, he will look at the picture just as you have handed it to him, upside down. A Colombian gardener who has to divide a rectangular plot will unfailingly mark out a crooked line across the plot, and then arrange

his plants somewhere along this line. A maid may have seen her mistress dozens of times in evening dress, but she will invariably bring her a pair of rubbers when she asks for dancing slippers. Is this simply carelessness? Walking through the streets of Bogotá, you constantly bump into people strolling along with dreamy, staring eyes. Or you can see an old woman cross herself, close her eyes, and stagger blindly off the curb into the middle of the speeding traffic.

There is something irrational or surrealistic about the behavior of these people that does not accord with our neat and orderly Occidental logic. Their relationship to space is a completely different one from ours: disorderly and subjective. And there is hardly any sense of neighborliness. This, explained some of my more reflective friends, is perhaps the secret of Colombia's kleptomania. Where there is no conception of "you" and "me," any feeling for "thine" and "mine" is bound to be absent; so that even millionaires will steal. It is an instinctive thing, and has nothing to do with morality.

HOW CAN ONE EXPECT these people to show rationality in their politics? As in the plain and simple things of life, absurdity triumphs here, too. During the first decades of the century, it seemed as if the country were succeeding in democratizing its politics and bridling its

unruly passions. But suddenly the whole rational superstructure came crashing down in an orgy of flames and chaos, in the riots of April 9, 1948.

To this day, nobody has really given an adequate explanation of the riots. On April 9, 1948, the Pan-American Conference was in session in Bogotá, about to approve vital resolutions concerning the common struggle against Communism. It seemed obvious at the time to lay the responsibility for the riots at the door of the Communists; it was to their interest to disrupt the Conference. Such, indeed, is the version given out to this day. But if the disciples of Moscow did in fact foment the disorders, they made a big mistake. For the littered and burning center of Bogotá so impressed the delegates from North and South America that — after moving to another place — they adopted the anti-Communist resolutions in record time. Intelligent people here do not believe in the Communist origin of the April 9 uprising. The man who assassinated José Eliecer Gaitan — the left-wing leader who even today remains the idol of the masses — survived his victim only for a short time, so it is impossible to find out whether Moscow or internal foes of Gaitan incited the assassin, or whether he had reasons of his own. And it was the death of Gaitan, driving the populace into a wild paroxysm of grief, that set off the

riots. It is of course possible that the small group of Communists who were — and still are — in Colombia, attempted to exploit the riots for their own ends. If they had been able to give it an anti-government direction, or any direction at all, the whole state structure would have been turned topsy-turvy. As it happened, however, the passions of the mob exploded in one afternoon's orgy of aimless violence. The next morning saw people walking about and staring at the ruins, like a nocturnal drunkard who wakes up in the morning with a terrible hangover to find himself sprawling amid his shattered china.

Yet the outbreak marked the awakening of a much more ominous force than Communism: the entry onto the political scene of the Indian people. Colombia has very few of the original *Indios* that you find in Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, virtually untouched to this day by the culture of the European conquerors. Only a few wild tribes still survive in the Colombian jungles, but these of course do not count as a political factor. Colombia's high plateaus were settled much more thoroughly, and in less of a feudal spirit, than were the vice-kingdoms of Mexico and Peru, and the mingling of the races has been much more complete. There is hardly an old Spanish family today that hasn't absorbed some Indian blood; on the other hand, even the

poorest farmer can boast of a few European ancestors. In Colombia, European ancestry is still a matter of pride, in contrast to Mexico where the prestige of an Indian origin is on the rise. The rural population and the urban proletariat of Indian origin lead a life devoid of all culture; the rich and magical Indian tradition has been lost in the mixing process. To the traveler, Colombia is a drab and dreary country. No colorful costumes brighten the somber scene, and the sky is overcast most of the year. The sun that gilds the face of poverty in other southern countries, rarely shines in Colombia; there is no rich tan under the dirt encrusting the sallow faces of the begging children who pursue the traveler through Bogotá's narrow streets.

THE MASS OF THE PEOPLE WAS non-existent politically, and ignorant of their own power, until José Eliecer Gaitan made his appearance in the 1940's. A man of the people himself, now risen to a place among the leading families, Gaitan was a respected lawyer and sat with chiefs of the Liberal Party. But when he mounted to the rostrum, he tore open his shirt, bared his chest to the populace, and shouted: "Look, I too am an *Indio*!"

The gentlemen who till then had raised their eyebrows at so much as a mention of the word "people" — and who still raise their eyebrows

today — were suddenly compelled to reckon with a new factor in their political calculations. The Liberal premier, Alfonso Lopez, as well as the present Conservative government, tried to flatter this new force by enacting extensive social and labor reforms. (The new labor laws, by the way, laid such a burden on the employer that at the end of 1948, eleven of the fifteen oil concerns operating in Colombia packed up and left.)

One must of course sympathize with this upsurge of the poor and disinherited. However, the outbreak of April 9, 1948, showed the problems involved in such a revolution. An uncontrolled and uncontrollable dynamism had come to life which threatened to disrupt entirely the subtle workings of traditional oligarchic politics. A new and explosive force that threatens to break up traditional social and political forms, without being able to work out revolutionary forms of its own, runs the risk of calling forth a reaction harsher than the original tyranny. This was the case after the failure of the Spanish republic; it is even more the case in Colombia, the super-Spain of South America.

OF COURSE, one shouldn't push this comparison of Colombia with Spain too far. The Liberals, sharing power since Bolivar with the Conservatives, are, unlike their European counterparts, deeply reli-

gious. In the nineteenth century, it is true, they were anticlerical to a certain degree; but today one is hard put to discover any difference between the two traditional parties. Gilberto Moreno, the Liberal leader whom I visited in prison, gave me a lengthy explanation of the paradox of why a Liberal regime at bottom benefited the church more than a Conservative one. The Colombian church, he said, always regarded its mission as a spiritual one, and never strove for secular influence. This lack of priestly ambition has therefore made anticlericalism pointless in Colombia. If there had ever been a unity of church and state in Colombia, he explained, it was the state (especially the Conservative state) that had dominated and used the church, and not the other way around. The Liberals, on the other hand, not only have refrained from reducing the power of the church, they have even tried to give the church a measure of freedom from state dictation, so that it might fulfil its spiritual mission the better. Liberal governments allotted more money to the church than did Conservative governments; and though they upheld the principle of academic freedom, this had no ill effects on religious belief in a land where Catholicism is so ingrained.

I quote Moreno's remarks not so much for their cogency and correctness, but as showing how far the Liberals have departed from

their anticlerical role. The Colombian church is in fact so omnipotent, so deep-rooted in the spirit of the people, that even its nominal opponents accept it without question. In 1941, President Alfonso Lopez wished to establish civil marriage as a right, and to strike any mention of God from the constitution; he encountered an icy resistance from his own party colleagues. A new and slightly modernized concordat, which Rome agreed to accept, had to be dropped in face of stubborn Conservative and clerical resistance — Colombia is more papal than the Pope. The failure of Lopez and others has brought about a situation where the clergy regards even the most harmless sort of liberalism as intolerable, and they exert all their influence in favor of the Conservatives.

I questioned other Liberal leaders about the differences between the Conservative and Liberal attitudes, and received only vague and evasive answers. These differences are in fact so small as to make the civil war raging between the two camps an absurdity.

In the capital, the Liberal leaders are able to convene their party congresses unmolested, and the Liberal press to criticize the government as far as the official censorship permits. This apparent normalcy, however, is only a mask. Outside of Bogotá, in the provinces, a running battle goes on between Liberals and Con-

servatives and blood flows freely. The struggle has all the bitter ruthlessness of a religious war; but since the ideological differences originally separating the antagonists have long ceased to exist, the war has now become a senseless effort to exterminate an opponent who differs from you in name only.

IT ALL BEGAN, quite democratically, in 1946. Power in Colombia invariably begets a feud in the victorious camp, which splits over internal differences and opens the way to its opponents. Gaitan, in 1946, set himself against the prevailing current in the Liberal Party, thus assuring the premiership to the Conservative candidate. After his assassination in 1948, the mob raging through Bogotá vented its wrath with particular fury on the house of Laureano Gomez, the Conservative premier. Laureano had always been a fervent and cantankerous authoritarian, worshipping Hitler and Mussolini. Disappointed by his country's disrespectful attitude toward law and order and his own house, he escaped to Spain. When he returned in 1949, he had learned his lesson. In the spring of that year, the parliamentary elections showed that the power of the Liberal Party was unbroken — after Gaitan's death it had united again — and that it had good prospects of winning the coming presidential elections. Laureano Gomez, running as the Conserva-

tive candidate, concluded that only a resort to terror could save the situation for him.

Thus the civil war began. As a first step, most of the leading Liberals were deprived of their voting rights. Their farms were raided and they themselves were either exiled or killed. The terror was chiefly directed against provinces and villages with Liberal majorities. In this atmosphere, all kinds of excesses took place, often with the local priest assisting the police in apprehending "heretics" and "enemies of the church." There were reports of crucifixions and rapes, and Goya's grim scenes seemed to have come to life again. Men fled their homes and gathered in the mountains, eager for revenge. Necessity and hunger soon turned the fighters for freedom into bandits.

Violence is not only used systematically against the opposition, but also against Colombia's growing Protestant community. When a few young fanatics in Spain attacked a Protestant chapel, the world was shocked. But this was nothing as compared with the systematic persecution of the Protestants in Colombia. The antipathy to Protestantism in all Latin American countries is not only religious but political, since Protestantism is identified with the Yankees of the North.

It is hard to imagine how all the violence will ever end. The Conservatives are so stained with blood

that they dare not permit political power to revert to the Liberals, for fear of the savage reprisals that would certainly follow. Premier Laureano Gomez is old and sick; he has delegated most of his duties to a personal representative. But he still directs the destiny of the country and keeps the opposition firmly in check—not only the Liberal opposition, but also his opponents among the Conservatives. His chief Conservative antagonist, Alzate, is just as authoritarian and arbitrary as himself; ideologically, there is nothing to choose between the two. Their struggle for power is purely a personal one, with Alzate already having the majority of the Conservative Party in his camp. Attempts have been made to heal the rupture, but the character of Colombian politics is stronger than the will of the *políticos*. Alzate intends to publish his own newspaper (if his party supporters will let him), and thus carry the fight into the open. Perhaps this controversy will ease the regime's iron grip on the country. Probably, however, it will only lead to more and greater bloodshed.

AMID THE GENERAL DESPAIR, I met a few people who still believe in the possibility of an internal regeneration. They belong to the "Testimonio" group; in the last few months they have made quite an impact on the intellectuals of the country. Their chief figure is Her-

man Vergara, Colombia's leading psychiatrist.

It all started in 1941, when the French Dominican padre, Gabriel Blanchet, got together a group of six or eight people to examine particular problems in a Christian spirit. In October, 1947, this small group decided to publish their ideas in a magazine called *Testimonio*. The reaction was surprising. The president of the Cattle Raisers Association set up the group's first branch in the province of Manizales. Soon other groups were formed all over the country. The clergy were quite suspicious at first, for the movement was one of laymen, without any clerical guidance; for a while, the threat of dissolution hung over their heads. But at the end of last year, the Italian padre Lombardi arrived in Colombia, breathing the spirit of a modern, socially conscious Catholicism into Colombia's medieval world. Suddenly the clergy, all the various orders, and the lay movement found themselves united on a common platform. An enlightened political Catholicism had come into existence overnight.

Since then the work has been continued in small groups. These never contain more than six to eight people, who meet weekly to study and

discuss problems in the fields of politics, economy, education, and psychology, trying to answer them in a Christian spirit. The movement has been spreading steadily and has even attracted the interest of Laureano Gomez. When Vergara told me this, with a triumphant smile, I couldn't help asking if this extension of the movement didn't endanger its basic concept. "Or, in the language of psychology, isn't the individual attempt at salvation, to use C. G. Jung's phraseology, in danger of losing its holy spirit and becoming an instrument of the demon when it turns collectivist and tries to embrace even representatives of the evil power."

"Jung is only a psychologist," answered Vergara; "God as well as the Devil are for him only functions of the human soul. We are Christians: we believe in the objective power of the Holy Ghost, who works through us. We believe that Colombia is at the beginning of an essential change."

Moved by his words, yet unpersuaded, I peered into the fine, almost childlike, and at the same time gray and aging features of this psychiatrist. I feared for the Holy Ghost — the Devil is stronger, at least in Colombia.

Victor Black

CAN WE BEAT THE Red Luftwaffe?

SHORTLY AFTER the MIG-15 first appeared in Korean skies, General Hoyt Vandenberg, Air Force Chief of Staff, told a worried congressional committee that the Russian fighters were superior to the latest American jet fighters. This unqualified statement caused consternation, especially in our own armed forces. If American industry could not compete qualitatively with the Russian postwar aircraft industry — it is common knowledge that the Soviet Air Force surpasses our own numerically — then the gloom and anxiety were justified.

But those of us with long memories took Vandenberg's statement with many grains of salt. We remembered similar "alarms" in the past: the "Fokker scourge" of 1915,

the "deadly Stuka" of the Battle of France in 1940, the surprises sprung by the German FW-190 in 1942, and the flashing speed of the jet-propelled Nazi Me-262 which went into action toward the end of World War II. On all these occasions, however, American air power had risen to the challenge, meeting and defeating the new enemy aerial threats. But the myth of German aeronautical superiority dies hard. One of the chief victims of this myth is General Vandenberg himself, who fears not so much the Soviet aircraft industry and Soviet-designed airplanes as a resurgent Luftwaffe, controlled and directed by the Soviet Union. This German air force, wearing the Soviet uniform, was what Vandenberg was speaking about.

Although Vandenberg later amended his original statement to say that the MIG-15 was only superior to the American jets then

Victor Black, who is a writer for the Douglas Aircraft Company in Santa Monica, California, has devoted many years to the study of military air power.

operating in Korea — obsolete F-80 Shooting Stars, early F-84 Thunderjets, and a handful of outmoded models of the F-86 Sabre — the cat was out of the bag. The Soviet Air Force had been “officially” recognized as a potent military machine, vastly superior to the inept weapon which the Luftwaffe had overwhelmed in World War II. Admittedly, Soviet research and development in aeronautics, which had reached a dead end at the close of World War II, was given a big boost by dragooned German specialists. But what is the whole story of the present Soviet Air Force? That story begins with the defeat of Nazi Germany.

ON THE MORNING of August 7, 1944, two weeks after the First American Army had broken out of the Normandy beachhead at St. Lo, the Nazi front was visited by a certain General Warlimont, Hitler's personal representative. The Germans had been attacking savagely for days in an attempt to close the gap. Warlimont had been dispatched to find out why this had not been done. The explanation given him by von Kluge, commanding the German armies, was: “It is questionable whether the enemy can be stopped at this point. His air superiority is tremendous and he smothers almost everything we do. At the same time, his air force prepares the way for and protects every movement of his own.

Our losses in men and equipment are extraordinary. . . .”

Two things von Kluge knew for a certainty: the once vaunted Luftwaffe was nowhere to be seen; and lacking it, the mighty Wehrmacht was being dissected by an enemy force no greater than itself and with considerably less battle experience. This enemy had become irresistible, in fact, by the addition of American tactical aviation. The country to the rear of the retreating Germans had already been pounded into an industrial junk heap by huge fleets of Allied strategic bombers. The Germans fell back through one ghost town after another. They were without food, gas, ammunition, or transport. They surrendered in droves — the wrecked army of a wrecked nation.

High on the list of the causes of Nazi Germany's defeat must be placed the failure of the Luftwaffe, of all the weapons in Hitler's arsenal the one which our military experts had feared the most. When the German army rolled into Poland in 1939, it was backed by the finest air force in the world. But for a variety of reasons the Luftwaffe lost its sting, until at the end of World War II this once formidable arm lay prostrate and impotent.

Arrayed behind the Luftwaffe stood what had been considered the finest collection of aeronautical brains ever assembled: Lippisch, Tank, Büemann, Heinkel, Messerschmitt,

the Horten brothers, and a host of others. They were indeed resourceful and inventive men, and carried Germany far ahead of other nations in theoretical aeronautics. But war requires much more than theoretical audacity. One statement can serve to illuminate Germany's failure in the air. When interrogated by Allied Intelligence officers after the Nazi surrender, Field Marshal Göring remarked: "The German aviation industry became obsessed with gadgets, which ultimately ruined the Luftwaffe."

In other words, the Germans refused to concentrate on good, battle-proven warplanes like the Me-109, Me-110, Ju-87, and later the Me-262; instead, they began to experiment with all sorts of revolutionary designs and power plants, which is fine in peacetime but disastrous in the midst of a war. A nation's aerial might is not measured in terms of freakish designs, elaborate wind tunnel models, or huge collections of aeronautical data. The strength of a nation's air power ultimately depends upon what can be sent aloft against the enemy. The internal combustion engine, not the jet or rocket, powered the planes of World War II.

THERE IS irrefutable evidence to bring against the myth of German aeronautical superiority. The defeat of Germany, hastened by the downfall of the Luftwaffe, should be

evidence enough. But disciples of the myth — and they are legion in the aircraft industry and United States Air Force — point to German developments in jet- and rocket-powered warplanes: the Natter, Viper, Arado 234-C, Heinkel 162, Me-163, Me-262, and missiles like the Wasserfall, Taifun, V-1, and V-2. These *were* revolutionary aircraft, but, as with the evolution of all weapons, Germany's particular and special requirements dictated their type and development.

From the beginning, the German concept of air power had always been tactical; it was to be used in support of ground forces and for interdiction. Germany's only venture into the realm of strategic aerial warfare during the Battle of Britain ended in disaster when the Luftwaffe attempted to overpower the British Spitfire, the most lethal fighter of World War II. The Luftwaffe was literally massacred by the Royal Air Force. The average life of a German bomber operating against Britain was reduced to 2.4 missions, a suicidal expenditure. After this one strategic venture, German aviation fell back on its old concept of tactical air power, concentrating on short-range airplanes of the interceptor type.

German developments in jet- and rocket-powered aircraft can be explained in this light. Warplanes like the rocket-powered Me-163 were high-speed, short-range interceptors,

designed for use against the Allied bombers grinding Germany into rubble. The Me-163, for example, had a flight time of less than ten minutes. But they were inexpensive, could be easily produced, and accorded perfectly with German aerial thinking.

THE UNITED STATES, on the other hand, had little use for such a warplane. America's aviation industry was engaged in producing battle-tested airplanes to supply the Allied world. Northrop Aircraft successfully flew a rocket-powered airplane in September, 1942 (the MX-324). But the U.S.A.A.F. then had little use for such a plane and the project was cancelled. The U.S.A.A.F. needed long-range fighters to escort her bombing fleets over the Continent and against Japan; we needed fighter-bombers to give tactical support to our ground forces about to invade Europe. American industry responded with the P-47 Thunderbolt, the P-38 Lightning, and the P-51 Mustang. Our air force needed a huge bombing fleet composed of long-range heavy bombers. American industry responded with the B-17 Fortress, the B-24 Liberator, and the B-29 Superfortress. Germany's failure even to develop a heavy bomber (the He-111, Do-172, and Ju-88 were all medium bombers by our standards) dogged them to the end of the war. Briefly, the United States has an offensive air

force; Germany stressed a defensive air force. These divergent aerial concepts dictated the type of warplanes produced by each country.

Upholders of the myth of German aeronautical superiority like to point to the V-2, the huge rocket used by the Nazis against London and Antwerp. Germany's need at the time for the V-2 is clear. She required some type of bombardment weapon as a substitute for bomber fleets that had never got off the drawing boards. The few bombers still possessed by the Germans could not penetrate the Allied defenses. Secondly, Hitler needed a "secret weapon" to bolster his own morale and that of the home front, as well as to terrorize the British. Thirdly, the Germans were running out of trained pilots. They hadn't enough time, facilities, or manpower to replenish their Luftwaffe adequately. It was only logical that Germany should switch to pilotless aircraft. But the V-2 was a short-range *unguided* weapon, with a maximum range of approximately two hundred miles, and had no meaning for an air force engaged in a global war. Today, billions of dollars are being spent by the United States Army, Navy, and Air Force to develop and produce guided missiles, but with the emphasis upon long-range accurately guided weapons capable of being put to strategic uses.

Of foremost importance today is not what the Germans *did* but

what they are *doing* — to the Soviet Air Force.

Toward the close of World War II, the Soviet Air Force had sunk, even numerically, into complete insignificance. The bulk of front-line Soviet warplanes were American-built, chiefly fighters. Soviet Russia also interned several B-29's incautious enough to stray into Siberia.

During the past six years, however, an extensive program of research and development has made the Soviet Air Force one of the two most powerful in the world. By the agreement reached at Yalta, the newest types of German warplanes fell into Soviet hands. As Willi Messerschmitt stated: "A minimum of eighty per cent of Germany's aircraft industry fell into the Russian grasp" through a freak of geography. These spoils included every important airframe, engine, and component that the Nazis had possessed.

Dr. Walther Riedel, formerly the technical director at Peenemunde (the Nazis' gigantic experimental station and laboratory for the development of jets and rockets, including the V-2), told me during an interview that "contrary to the British and Americans who smashed everything in their way, the Reds were very careful never to harm a German factory or laboratory. No German research laboratory or factory, to my knowledge, was ever bombed or damaged by the Russians during the German-Russian campaign." The

Soviets, consequently, seized intact whole laboratories, drawings, factories, models, precision machine tools, and equipment of every description; test ranges, supersonic wind tunnels, warehouses full of experimental printed data; and some of the best German engineers and scientists — as Dr. Riedel put it, "the cream of the German brain crop." For example, at Peenemunde, which is about twice the size of our own White Sands Proving Ground in New Mexico, the Soviets acquired the entire station and range, together with all the important substations including Mittel Werke, the underground assembly center which employed over 10,000 people, plus the latest models of the V-2, and Germany's newest rocket and jet fighters.

Soviet Russia not only "expropriated" German scientists, engineers, and equipment, but also the majority of German aerial concepts. This could have been predicted, because, like Germany, Russia is primarily a land power, and the purpose of the Soviet Air Force has always been, and is now, to back up the Soviet Army tactically. There has been no unification of the Soviet military forces; the Soviet Air Force is still a branch of the Soviet Army.

THE PRESENT Soviet Air Force is merely an extension of the German Luftwaffe as it existed at the end of World War II. Immediately

after the war, Russia hurriedly improvised a jet-fighter program, centered around the Yak-15 and MIG-9. In the case of both these planes, German turbojet engines were merely "slung onto" conventional airframes. A short time later, the German Me-262 was renamed the La-15 and incorporated into the Soviet Air Force.

The second phase of the Russian fighter build-up featured more powerful turbojets developed by the German engineers working in Soviet Russia, together with rocket-powered interceptors. Out of this program evolved the La-16, a copy of the German Me-362, and the Yak-21, a replica of the Me-263. This development of German-designed rocket interceptors for defense against strategic bombers like the American B-36 has been almost wholly a German-directed program.

Russia's two first-line fighters, the MIG-15 and LA-17, stem directly from the Focke-Wulf Ta-183, designed by Kurt Tank, one of Hitler's best aeronautical engineers. It is interesting to compare Argentina's Ae-33 Pulqui II, developed by Tank for Peron, with the La-17. Both were evolved at the same time from Tank's original Ta-183; both appear practically identical.

Other important German aircraft spoils incorporated by the Russians into the Soviet Air Force included the Blohm and Voss P.215, with German axial-flow turbojets prob-

ably having been substituted by the Russians for the original ramjets, and the EF-128, a modified version of a German all-weather swept-wing fighter.

Superior probably to the MIG-15 is the Lippisch-designed P-13A, the original German designation. This swept-wing fighter, comparable to the U.S. 1954 Interceptor and England's GA-5 in over-all design, is a defensive weapon on which the Russian general staff is banking heavily.

The Russian aircraft industry and Soviet Air Force have obviously followed German practice in their concentration on single-engine jet fighters rather than jet bombers. But both the MIG-15 and LA-17, Russia's top production fighters, leave much to be desired with regard to range. Their primary function will have to be as ground-support weapons and interceptors. They are not suitable for bomber escort — even if Russia had the bombers.

The Russian jet-engine program started from practically nothing after World War II with the purchase of the British Rolls-Royce "Nene" and "Derwent" centrifugal-compressor jet engines, and the exploitation of German axial-flow turbojets developed by BMW, Junkers, and Heinkel-Hirth. With Germans assisting them, the Russians have tended to favor the axial-flow designs over the centrifugal-compressor type. There are indications, however,

that the Russians are having trouble getting more power out of the German axial-flow engines and are gradually shifting to the British-developed type. The latest MIG-15's are believed to be using a modified Rolls-Royce "Nene" instead of their original German engines. None of these Soviet turbojets, however, is believed to approach either our Curtis-Wright J-65 axial-flow turbojet, our Pratt and Whitney centrifugal-flow turbojet, or other models developed by General Electric and Westinghouse. But this superior power of American jet engines does not necessarily mean more speed for our airplanes. American fighters are provided with considerably more armor plating to protect the pilot than are Russian fighters, together with a multitude of safety devices and automatic navigation and fire-control equipment. Thus American fighter designs tend to sacrifice some speed for safety and efficiency. This has paid off in Korea where American jets, especially the Sabre, hold a big combat edge over Russia's latest MIG's.

THE SOVIET BOMBER build-up has not been nearly as successful as their fighter program. Here Russia has been forced to use her own designs, chiefly because Germany had little in the way of bombing planes for Russia to loot. For this reason, too, Russia is apparently attempting to exploit previous German work

on guided missiles, as a substitute for bombers. High Pentagon sources reveal that Russian scientists, having become obsessed with the V-2, are expending the majority of their efforts on tinkering with this basically obsolete missile. Firings at Peenemunde this year of the V-2 indicated that the Russian development of guided missiles has advanced little since the end of World War II. In addition, it is reported that Russia is mass-producing V-1's and V-2's possessing nearly the same characteristics they had eight years ago, when they were being manufactured by Hitler.

Although the Soviet bomber program has been conducted behind a cloak of secrecy, rumors persist that Russia has failed to produce a single successful heavy bomber since World War II.

The Russian bomber force centers around three warplanes: the Tu-10, the Soviet counterpart of the British Canberra tactical jet bomber; the four-engine IL-16, somewhat similar to the North American B-45 Tornado which is now considered obsolete for combat; and the Tu-4, a modified B-29 that is the backbone of the Soviet Russian strategic bombing force. The TuG-75, the so-called Russian B-36, is reportedly still in the design stage. Although the Soviets were first interested in the German Me-264, the bomber with which the Nazis hoped to bomb the United States, they have now

reportedly dropped the design. Actually, then, the Soviet bomber force is in a worse position than was the Luftwaffe. They possess not a single strategic bomber with which to bombard the United States.

The Soviet Air Force has nothing to compare with the B-47 Stratojet, the B-52, or the B-60. She has no long-range fighter-escort aircraft to support such bombers even if she possessed them. Against these high-flying aerial giants, the Russian short-duration rocket interceptors, whose maximum flight time is in the neighborhood of twenty minutes, would be of doubtful value.

The latest United States jet fighters are certainly superior to anything yet unveiled or believed to be in development in the Soviet Union. Great Britain, with her remarkable Royal Air Force which has been steadily developed even under an austerity program, is equipped with both strong fighter and bomber squadrons. Not having the facilities of the United States, Britain has stressed quality over quantity; the Royal Air Force will prove a formidable foe to any enemy. The British GA-5, the most powerful jet fighter in the world, is a worthy successor to the redoubtable Spitfire.

THE MOST GLARING Russian deficiency is in the field of electronics, and good electronic equipment is vitally important in both bombers and fighters. This deficiency

may prove an increasing handicap to the Soviet Air Force. Two "captured" German electronicists of great ability, Manfred von Ardenne and Heinrich Hertz, should help to alleviate the situation somewhat. However, the field of electronics has become too broad and varied for two men to carry all the load.

In the opinion of Dr. A. Büsemann (now in the United States at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia), generally recognized as the world's outstanding aeronauticist, "Russia stands fairly high in theoretical work. But what Russia is short of is the big middle class of well-prepared hands and brains. Peak results are easy to obtain, but the problem is actually the over-all level and the ability to improve the soft spots. Today, Russia is incapable of matching the level found in the United States."

The Soviet Union should never be underestimated. She has demonstrated tremendous powers of recuperation since the end of World War II. The Soviet Air Force is a potent weapon, the largest in the world, and is steadily growing more powerful. It is a weapon not so much to be feared, however, as understood. A decade ago we met the "dread" Luftwaffe, learned its strength and weaknesses, and defeated it. If need be we can do it again, even though it now sports the Soviet star in place of the crooked cross.

Report from Asia:

Defeat by Default

Edward Hunter

IF WE SET OUT deliberately to discourage the people of Asia from joining our side, we couldn't improve on what we've been doing. This is not how it seems to Americans and Britons at home. But it is how our statements and deeds act on the vast Asian population.

Take the case of an author named Chen Han-po, who lived with his wife and son in a hut of mud, box-wood, and flattened tin cans, in a refugee section of Hong Kong. He went from office to office trying to

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*In our May issue THE MERCURY examined American policy in Korea and Yugoslavia. In July, Boris Shub went into the question of "Why America Is Losing World War III." Edward Hunter here continues this series of articles on American foreign policy by looking hard at our self-defeating actions in the Far East. Mr. Hunter, who recently returned from his post in Hong Kong, is a contributing editor to THE AMERICAN MERCURY.*

persuade editors and officials to help him expose and fight Communism. He was turned away as obviously suspect, and his writings were dismissed as sensationalism. "He must be a plant," they said, and even disbelieved his name. "If what he says is true, the Communists would kill him," they remarked with finality.

The Communists, ironically, were the only ones who took Chen Han-po at his word — they knew he was telling the truth. So they killed him.

Chen Han-po was a Chinese in his late thirties who managed to look neat in spite of poverty. Infrequent eating helped to keep him slim. *Peiping Today*, his first book, relates his experiences as a Communist Party operator assigned to the middle-of-the-road political parties, to manipulate them from the inside; this was part of perhaps the most



effective tactic used to hoodwink the Chinese intellectuals and our own liberals. He describes the new class privileges bitterly fought over by Red leaders, their streamlined cars and sex rivalries.

The Communists heard a rumor that he was finishing an even more detailed exposé, and assassinated him, in time, they thought, to shut him up. But he had handed two manuscripts to his publisher, the Freedom Press, a week before his murder. One was a play, *Underground Fire*, which describes the biting disillusionment that followed the first enthusiasm with which the Reds had been welcomed into Shanghai, and the resultant anti-Mao Tse-tung element that arose in party ranks.

The other posthumous manuscript was entitled *How I Served Mao Tse-tung's Gestapo*, the most detailed and damaging account ever given, with names and addresses, of the Communist cultural groups set up to control the Chinese people.

Yet Chen Han-po had been turned away by editors and correspondents presumably doing their utmost to expose just what he was exposing, and by educators and diplomats presumably eager to fight the menace he was fighting. When he — and there have been others like him — telephoned them for appointments, knocked at their doors, pleaded with them, they just couldn't bring themselves to believe his story. Igor Gouzenko, who exposed the Cana-

dian spy ring in 1945, for the first time providing irrefutable proof of the Russian government's complicity in espionage, had a similar experience. According to the Canadian government's findings, he was unable "to have anyone accept him seriously." Only the kindness of a next-door neighbor in hiding him saved the case from suppression.

WHAT IS the explanation for all this? Part of the reason is that we have created a vague idealization in our own minds of the people who ought to be fighting our enemy. They must be a combination of Jesus and Marx. Nobody with any of the ordinary human frailties is considered eligible. Part of the reason, too, is the heritage of decrying the "seeing of Reds under every bed," a practice that diverted our attention from so many Communist conspirators. We are willing to tackle the problem in theory, but when an actual case arises, we pick on any implausible point or doubtful detail to justify ourselves in rejecting the whole as false. Then, too, there is the guilt complex. So many shy away in practice from implementing what they scorned as "hysteria" in their own pasts; so many remember the time when they, too, thought Mao Tse-tung only an agrarian reformer and no real Communist.

And only the most naïve will insist that there are no longer any actual Communists and working fel-

low-travelers to exert their influence on behalf of the party.

Not only individuals but events are involved. During a hot interval on the Korean front, for instance, it might at least have been expected that we should welcome thankfully and discreetly any situation on Red China's borders that could divert Chinese Communist troops from Korea and give Peiping a two-front scare.

But when a Chinese force was discovered preparing to harass Red China from bases in Upper Burma, our own side raised as much of a fuss about it as if an enemy had taken the field against us. Reuters news agency, represented in Burma by its Indian affiliate, ran long exposés of the so-called invasion; these reports were picked up and publicized, especially in the Far East and southeast Asia.

The British government promptly asked, on Burma's behalf, that the United Nations send a commission to investigate the matter on the spot. Burma as promptly denied that she had made any such request. English sources in Rangoon told me that the initiative had not come from there, but from London. "We were as surprised by it as the Burmese," they informed me. "May I ask my honorable friend what responsibility he has for the government of Burma?" a bewildered member of Britain's Parliament asked the Foreign Office spokesman. For a government such as Britain's,

so ticklish about protocol and the prerogatives of sovereignty, to have acted in this way, was to give Asia a demonstration of our side fighting itself.

With this object lesson before them, how long will it be before other Asians stick their necks out in such hazardous undertakings?

In Malaya and Indo-China, where Communist armies are in action, and in Hong Kong, on whose borders Communist armies are poised, live thousands of Chinese military and intellectual refugees from Communism; they fled rather than submit, and their whole careers evidence their determination to resist.

You would think that some way could be found to enable these people to harass our common enemy. The Communists have shown how it can be done, using such expedients as fronts and volunteers. Nobody in his right mind would expect us to go to the costly extreme of rounding up these people and immobilizing them. Yet this is exactly what our side has done. The Indo-Chinese authorities disarmed anti-Communist troops that fled from Red China; in spite of their appeals to be allowed to join the forces fighting Ho Chi-min, these troops were scattered and sent as far away as possible. Chinese with large followings who have pleaded for permission to organize and train men in Malaya have been repulsed. Hong Kong has jailed many people caught trying

to contact guerrilla forces in Red China. What other conclusion can an Asian reach from this but that he is not really supposed to oppose the Communists?

WHAT HAPPENED to a full-length documentary film, *Formosa Today*, is a different sort of incident, but when added to innumerable others, helps expose the pattern. The big theaters of Hong Kong refused to exhibit it, explaining that the colony's Chinese would never go to see it, as the majority were neutral; that most of the others were pro-Communist; and that the political section of the police would understandably object to the film as controversial and liable to create a disturbance.

The frustrated movie agent found a Chinese opera house with an idle afternoon. He advertised a single matinee in one small Chinese-language newspaper. The result was unprecedented. The telephone was kept ringing all day by people trying to reserve seats. The agent, now reinforced, was able to induce two out-of-the-way movie houses to show the film for three days each, and transferred it there.

So sure was everyone that three days of four or five showings in each theater would exhaust all possible audiences that American films were scheduled for the fourth day. But so crowded and enthusiastic was each performance that the American

films were postponed, first one day, then more. After ten days in one theater, and eleven in the other, the two film houses were forced by previous commitments to go back to their original schedules.

The film was then transferred to sweltering, uncomfortable neighborhood theaters. This was when I heard about it, from Chang Kuo-sin, a United Press correspondent, whose book, *Eight Months Behind the Bamboo Curtain*, printed in Hong Kong soon after the mainland fell, never reached the American public, while books glossing over Chinese Communist excesses were receiving nationwide propaganda backing.

"There's a secret movie hit in this city," he remarked. "The English-language press has given it no attention, and it's almost the same in the Chinese-language press. But it's playing to crowded houses, and the audiences cheer Chiang Kai-shek each time he appears."

This sounded fantastic, so I went to see for myself. I found the film in a long, narrow, old-fashioned neighborhood showhouse, where all the seats were hard wood. The audience was markedly working class. People gripped their seats tensely. Sure enough, when Chiang appeared there was loud applause, and no booing.

The film wasn't a particularly interesting one. If I hadn't been reporting on it I shouldn't have stayed through. A tedious documentary, it showed the economic

and military life of the island — sugar refineries, Chiang Kai-shek reviewing troops and tanks, power plants, forest preserves, and rice paddies. I couldn't imagine anyone coming to see it, much less staying through it all, if he weren't anti-Communist to start with, and was seeing what he wanted to believe: that a base existed somewhere which might some day help to liberate his country.

The film went from movie house to movie house for months, a secret box-office hit, but much more than that. This was a public opinion poll on the sentiments of a typical overseas Chinese community. An extraordinarily large fraction of the Chinese population of Hong Kong must have deliberately gone to see a film that they knew was pro-Nationalist and anti-Mao Tse-tung. Here, in the protective silence of the movie house, they were able to give expression to their hopes.

This should have been most encouraging to the local authorities, for it showed that their 2,000,000 Chinese inhabitants, far from being neutral or pro-Communist, wanted to be on our side. Yet the English persisted in pessimistically telling you that if the Communists attacked, the local Chinese either would do nothing, or would help the invader. Actually, if the Communists did take Hong Kong, it would be by default, as the result of their convincing the Chinese inhabitants

that nothing could be done about it, and that the West couldn't be depended upon. After all, this and not the merits of the Communists was responsible for most of the Red victories; this was how cities such as Canton fell without a shot being fired.

Each Chinese who came to see *Formosa Today* knew vaguely that it was under some form of official disapproval, and that the sentiments expressed were contrary to official policy. Obviously, this made a boomerang out of what should have been a propaganda victory.

THEN THERE IS the example of the two rival holidays, October 1 marking the establishment of the Communist regime at Peiping, and October 10, the traditional Double Tenth of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's republic. These provide a gauge of Chinese political sentiment.

Last October 1, the business center of Hong Kong, occupied by the major British and Chinese shipping and mercantile firms, was a sea of Chinese Communist flags. I joined a group of Chinese newspapermen in a tour of the city. When we left the big business section we also left the red flags. Few were to be seen in the Chinese residential sections.

A group of Chinese editors gave a freedom dinner that day to challenge the Communists. This was something our side might have been expected to welcome. Police ordered

it terminated and the sponsors were put on the grill for having invited foreign correspondents. Anti-Communists living in the refugee camps on the other side of the harbor were stopped from crossing over.

Next day, the British-owned press ran front-page stories that took it for granted the pro-Peiping demonstration had been city-wide and spontaneous; it disposed of the freedom dinner in a few buried lines. This was followed next day with an editorial actually rebuking the Chinese who had succeeded in voicing anti-Peiping sentiments at the Red demonstrations!

October 10, the Nationalist holiday, came along and there were no Chinese republican flags in the business center of the city; none at all. Outside, in the workers' quarters, I saw tens of thousands of Nationalist flags. They weren't the big cloth flags that the big business houses could afford; they were generally of plain paper, the kind distributed by newsboys, or sold for a couple of coppers.

Such a token of resistance to Communist propaganda might properly have been expected to encourage the authorities charged with preserving Hong Kong's freedom. Not so. The British-owned press gave the story a modest inside position, in significant contrast to the prominence given the October 1 affair.

What was the humble Asian to think about this? If such powerful

elements apparently sided with, or had grown reconciled to, Communism, surely the little Asian should climb on the bandwagon, too.

In the nearby Portuguese colony of Macao, students in Chinese high schools successfully defied Communist efforts to make them support germ warfare and atrocity charges against the Americans. A few noses were bloodied. Thereupon "comfort missions" were sent to the schools by local Communist-run organizations; and these supported the Red students groups with a series of exaggerated demands. The Portuguese authorities let pressure be put on the anti-Communist youngsters to apologize and knuckle under. Since then, of course, there has been no further resistance by the students to Communist classroom control. How many of them have learned this lesson for life?

About this time, Portuguese police who dared stop a virulent Communist propaganda movie were threatened by the Red radio. The Portuguese authorities backed down again, a cash "comfort fund" was given to the aggrieved movie house staff, and the censored portions were restored. When are these subordinate police going to censor another Communist movie?

**W**HAT ARE ASIANS EXPECTED to deduce from incidents such as these? They already witnessed the all-out campaign by Peiping de-

manding General MacArthur's dismissal. The Asian people don't know the details of this case as it is known in America; they only know that Peiping insisted that MacArthur be fired, and that he was fired.

One would have to search far and wide to find anything so detrimental to Asian morale as the whole disgraceful prisoners-of-war scandal in Korea. What haunts Asian minds is the knowledge that only the accident of the capture of an American general enabled the press to expose the true situation in the camps. Hardened Communist agitators, deliberately infiltrated among the captured Chinese prisoners for this purpose, were able to dominate our P.O.W. camps, browbeating and murdering those unwilling to further Communist ends. "The guards have little or no control over what goes on inside," and the bodies of the slain non-Reds were victoriously passed out to them in the mornings, United States soldiers frankly admitted. Such camps were listed as unanimously desiring repatriation to Red China, although it was evident, if only from the number of P.O.W.'s beaten up or slain, that many were anti-Peiping.

When General Ridgway left his U.N. Command in Tokyo to take over Allied forces in Europe, he gave a farewell interview that was widely published. He spoke a great deal about Communist insincerity and lies — no news to Asians — and

then said something that did mean something new to these people. There might be a chance, he hopefully said, that the list of 70,000 Chinese and North Korean prisoners who had said they would not "forcibly resist" being returned to Communist China or North Korea, could be increased by a "re-screening" process.

What else could this mean to the Asians than that the Americans didn't want these people to be on our side, and were trying to dissuade those who surrendered in response to our appeals and promises, to please go back to their Communist masters and take their punishment? This was confirmed some weeks later when dispatches said that a new screening had raised the total to 78,000, and that even more names might be added!

Much disquieting information about the American role in Korea has come out in the British Parliament's question period; these disclosures tend to increase the Asian people's feeling of betrayal. How, for instance, are they to understand this statement by Foreign Secretary Eden:

"There was no desire on the part of the United Nations Command to increase the number of prisoners who did not want to return. On the contrary, our desire being to get an agreement and to get our people out, the whole onus of wish, if I may so express it, on our part was that there

should be as few of these as possible."

Selwyn Lloyd, Minister of State, expressed it more succinctly — and callously:

"From the very beginning it was appreciated that the question of repatriation would be a difficult matter. It was obvious that some prisoners of war would not want to return, but also it was quite obvious that the more who did not want to return the greater would be the embarrassment to the United Nations Command. We wanted as few as possible to opt to stay in South Korea, and during the screening every endeavor was made to persuade as many as possible to agree to return. . . .

"I repeat again that as far as the United Nations Command are concerned" — at that time this meant only the Americans — "every interest of theirs lay in assuring that at the conclusion there should be as few of these people as possible who did not want to go."

WE WOULD HAVE to go far to find a more flagrant example of our forgetting that what looks one way to us may look entirely different to another fellow abroad. Moscow's international politicians are trained to exploit this. Ours make cataclysmic blunder after blunder by talking as if we were still in the age of couriers and clipper ships.

We forget that an impression has the same effect as a fact, if believed

in. By the time something else has happened, a propaganda result has been achieved. This is the realm of thought warfare, in which we have been licked continuously, because the enemy knows how to utilize a wish or a stalemate situation as if it were a victory.

By forgetting that this is psychological warfare, we say and do things that dishearten, antagonize, and alienate the Asians. Communist Russia, on the contrary, never forgets this factor, and chooses her words and deeds for their effect on other people. We make believe that others aren't listening to what is not intended for their ears. This may be good sportsmanship, or good decorum, but the other side doesn't know it.

What were Asians to think, for instance, of the following, as related by United Press?

"The U.N. delegate in the Panmunjon truce tent told North Korean Communist General Nam Il that the questions used by the United Nations in the screening of war prisoners were designed to 'encourage a maximum of prisoners to return to your side, and not to oppose their return.'"

We permitted the Chinese Communists repeatedly to broadcast promises of an amnesty to the P.O.W.'s, if only they would return to Red China. Secret police in China at that time already were rounding up relatives and friends of those who



had shown a desire not to go back — their names had been passed into Red China by agents.

We facilitated those broadcasts, and so in Asian minds we stood morally behind those promises, which everybody knew would no more be observed than any other pledges made by the Communists. No matter what the outcome, the knowledge cannot be erased from Asian minds that all along we stressed that only those insisting they would “forcibly resist repatriation” would not be returned to Communist hands.

This continued to be our policy to the weary end, as we can see in the case of the recently proposed “face-saving” plan by which the lists of P.O.W.’s would be made over, in a manner, the Associated Press reported, that would enable “the Communists to proclaim that they got back all Red ‘war prisoners,’ as they have persistently demanded.”

**Y**ET WE SHOULD certainly be able to understand by now that the Communists aren’t interested in war prisoners as individuals. Whether they get back this or that particular Chinese or Korean isn’t the point. What is important to them is to strengthen the impression that anyone who leaves the Red side, either willingly or by compulsion, will inevitably find himself back again in Communist hands, and woe betide

him then! To allow the Reds to tell the Asian people that they have succeeded in this was exactly what Peiping and Moscow wanted. The mere fact that we were willing to agree to this so-called “face-saving” is what worries the Asians, not whether we were able to put this particular plan across or not. Next time it might be them.

On top of this, we went out of our way to let the world know that, far from rebutting the Communist accusations and smears, we abstained from being specific on so-called controversial matters, just as U.S.I.S. libraries in Southeast Asia tactfully abstained from including books that tell specifically what is happening in Communist China. This, after all, is what Asians are most interested in finding out about. There is no such discreetness in the books and pamphlets circulated by Soviet representatives.

A Member of Parliament actually asked the British government to give assurances that “anti-Communist propaganda” was not being given to Chinese and Korean P.O.W.’s. “There is no official attempt to indoctrinate these people,” was the answer. The Asian, who has witnessed the way in which Communist leadership loses no opportunity not only to indoctrinate, but to force its way of thinking on those within its power, by sinister “brain-washing” techniques, will naturally ask, “Why not?”



In Britain's Parliament, too, the information was given out that nobody who had been connected with the Chinese Nationalists was allowed to be an interpreter, or to do political education work in Korea, or to have anything to do with those who had been under Communist control. Yet who else in Asia has had the experience of the Nationalists in dealing with the Communists, and who could be as effective with one Chinese as another Chinese?

THIS DEFEATISM on our part, this rebuffing of our friends, which has enabled the Reds to win by default and not by their own merits, did not happen overnight. It grew up over the years, reaching the point where any Asian who praised the American way of life was regarded by Stalinist-influenced administrators as "unobjective" and downright crude, and passed over when we had jobs or assistance to give out.

This was aided by the illusion that tolerance meant belittling yourself, seeing good only on the other side. This illusion apparently lay behind the spectacle put on by a member of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's party in Pakistan. A young woman guest, a native, mentioned that she hoped to go to America to continue her education. Oh no, don't do that, this man told her, and gave her a long harangue on American discrimination and American discomforts. For-

tunately, an American Negro, merely a guest, interrupted to defend American life, explaining that along with the great good went a comparatively little bad, that progress was being made all the time, and there were opportunities for all.

The editor of a Chinese Communist newspaper, whom I had known in previous days, one night answered my question, "How did you get that way?" We were sitting up late after dinner. "I was a student, with fine marks and a good knowledge of English," he began. "Your country was giving out a number of scholarships, and I applied. I was rejected. There wasn't a person among those accepted who had anything like my knowledge of English, or my friendly feelings toward the United States. I asked the American lady in charge of the scholarship program why she had skipped me over."

His hurt and humiliation still showed in his voice. "I am restricting my selection to those who would be in danger from the Kuomintang if they remained in China," she informed me.

"Every one of the young men she selected" — and here he stopped to name each, and what job he held now, so deeply had this incident affected him — "is back in China today, serving the Communists, using what you taught them to fight you the more."

How often I've sat among Chinese friendly to us — people who receive

flattering offers from Peiping to return and serve Red China, who frequently don't know where their next meal or bed might come from — and have heard them ask in dismay how it was that they weren't able to land a job with the Americans, while those who boasted of their so-called neutrality, or actually opposed the United States, were showered with favors. This might have been simply high-minded tolerance on our part, but it was hard for those friendly Asians to understand it that way.

THE MOST IMPORTANT practical decision any Asian has to make is: the democratic world or Communism? He isn't being given much time to decide. He knows that the Chinese Communists talk only of an "all-Asia front," with Korea, Malaya, Indo-China, and the Philippines as merely sectors on that long front. If Red China is here to stay, he knows that this is tantamount to saying that all Asia will become Red.

So his reaction can easily be imagined when he hears even the Churchill government saying that it is only biding its time in the matter of bringing Red China into the Security Council, and that its pro-Peiping pressure is merely being "postponed" while the Korean negotiations go on. Even if events make the postponement permanent, Communism will have gained the

propaganda battle, as it had in the case of Britain's long-offered recognition of Red China, which Peiping has ignored for a couple of years in the most insolent manner.\*

The Asian's sceptical or negative attitude toward us may be understood, too, when he hears Labor chieftains in England, through party big wigs such as Herbert Morrison and John Strachey, warn publicly that as soon as they return to power, they will do all they can to bring Peiping into the U.N. The Asian is constantly reading statements by Indian government heads that Red China "is here to stay." He heard Pandit Nehru inform his parliament that India would not help the free world in a pinch. "I should like an ever wider area in this world — in Asia, let us say — of countries which decide that they will not enter war, that whatever happens, they will not enter the area of warfare, they will try at least to restrict the warfare to other regions. . . .

"If you say there is a war on today, we are neutral. If you say there is a cold war, we are certainly neutral. . . . We do not propose to join that war. It does not matter who is right and who is wrong. . . ."

What, then, does matter?

The most powerful card that Communism plays is the impression it is able to spread in a very personal way that its retribution can be de-

\* See Edward Hunter, *"The Suicide of Recognizing Red China,"* May, 1952.

layed but never avoided, that it is the impersonal wave of the future.

MOSCOW CONSIDERS ITSELF at war; in this new kind of warfare the enemy keeps his eyes on the objective rather than the means, and regards anything that helps to win as a weapon. The weapon may range from a leaflet or a churchman to a prostitute or a bullet, anything that changes a man's attitude, by sweet persuasion or brute force. Old-fashioned warfare, in which only death-dealing and city-destroying tools were used, is too expensive for this modern imperialism. A dead man can't labor; a demolished city can't produce machines; a ruined and desolated countryside can't grow food.

This is psychological warfare, and old-fashioned warfare is merely a part of it. Moscow's whole emphasis is on what makes all these weapons work — propaganda pressures. Moscow never would tolerate the series of psychological errors of which we have been guilty, for Moscow is maneuvering so that the satellite peoples will bear the brunt of the

fighting for her, seeking to cut the enemy — mainly ourselves — down to size, so that she can come in later with the *coup de grâce*.

That we have any friends left is a tribute to the essential justice of our cause, and the inherent evil of the Communist side. Even when we do the right thing in a big way, we do it so late and after so much criticism that it appears to be forced and niggardly. If the Communists have been able to go so far with false promises that answer the yearnings of broad masses of people, without either the ability or the intention to fulfil them, how much farther could we go if we utilized our own tactics fearlessly, telling the truth boldly, and reinforcing it with a healthy and frank power!

Until we do, the Asian can be expected to follow a neutrality that is against ourselves, or to feel that the only course left him is to give in, go along with the Communists. It can be demonstrated that such a course is self-defeating and foolish for Asia — but we don't demonstrate it. It still remains a question: "Whom are we fighting?"

Joseph R. Fiszman

# STAKHAI

*The Story of a Chinese Youth*

WHEN CHAN WING-YU was thirteen, according to the Chinese count, his father took him to the printing shop where he himself had worked for several decades. The shop was called the North China Press, and was located at the rue Bourgeat in the French Concession in Shanghai.

Bidding his son wait in the dark corridor, the father slowly opened the door to the office. Through the glass Chan could see his father bow, nervously finger his cap, smile humbly, and then bow again. With quick steps the father shuffled back to the door, opened it and beckoned his son to enter. Chan stepped across

the threshold and remained motionless just within the door.

"My son. He is shy."

A thin white man sat behind the desk in the office. He had a sharp pointed chin, a long nose, and yellow watery eyes which seemed to look without seeing, and even though they seemed not to see, Chan could feel the weight of those eyes upon him.

"How old is he, this son of yours?" the foreigner asked.

"Thirteen years old."

"He is too small for his age," the foreigner said, "too small."

"Oh yes, Master, but he is old enough to learn a trade and bring home money." The father bowed. The white man nodded.

And Chan Wing-yu started on his first job.

The white man was the manager of the printing shop, a Russian immigrant named Kovalski. And because he was a Russian and could not pronounce the Chinese names —

Joseph R. Fiszman escaped from his native Poland in 1939, passed the next decade in China and Japan, and came to this country in 1949. At present he is a free-lance writer, and is working on a book about the refugee problem in the Far East. The characters in "Stakhai" are based on actual persons and events.

sometimes he couldn't even tell his workers apart — he gave every Chinese employee a Russian nickname: Vasili, Kuzma, Ivan, and so forth. Right from the beginning he called Chan Wing-yu Stakhai, and nobody including Kovalski himself ever knew why. The name Stakhai stuck, however, and when Chan had finally convinced himself that it did not mean some dirty word, he even came to like his new name — Stakhai.

Not only did the workers of the North China Press have Russian names, everyone of them also knew a few Russian words; and although they uttered these words cheerfully and without malice, they understood well enough that they were curse words, words which when spoken to a Russian caused his ears to redden.

SINCE SHANGHAI was a cosmopolitan city where many nationalities mingled, the printing shop took on all kinds of jobs: Chinese advertising posters, Japanese notices, German bulletins, English publications, Russian pamphlets and, from time to time, even the printing of holy books in Hebrew. Most of the Chinese compositors could not even read Chinese. They simply recognized each type by its shape. Sometimes, of course, they made mistakes — this could not be avoided. One particular mistake, however, caused Kovalski to shout and rage

with more than usual violence. When the Soviet government replaced the old "International" with another anthem, several thousand copies of the new song were ordered by the Soviet Residents Club in Shanghai. An embarrassing error was made and no one, absolutely no one, would admit to it. The new song had a phrase, "*Slavsia otyetchestvo*," meaning "Cover yourself with glory, Fatherland." But one of the Chinese compositors, Vasili, Kuzma or Ivan, had set the word "Spassia," meaning "Save yourself." An upheaval ensued — "What does it mean, the Fatherland should save itself?" . . . The order had not only been set but copies had been printed and sent off before the error was discovered. Kovalski blasphemed, raged, apologized to the Soviet Club, and ordered every worker to work overtime — without pay, of course — to correct the unpardonable error.

Kovalski was a man who flared up easily, and once enraged, his wrath steadily mounted. He would grow angry with himself for having lost his temper so quickly, and would shout and swear even more. To him all Chinese were *Hung-hu-tse*, Manchurian bandits, and all Asians without exception *phazani*, stupid geese. The fact that the workers sang popular Chinese songs while they composed the foreign-language bulletins and pamphlets annoyed him. "No wonder they make mistakes," he would shout, "their minds are in

Dasca, at the amusement center, instead of on their work."

Sometimes, however, at the end of a day he would tire of the shouting and raging. His voice would become hoarse, so that he could scarcely hear himself. Then he would take a gulp from the bottle of *shiozki*, Shanghai-made vodka, which he kept in his desk drawer, and his head would slowly droop on one shoulder as though someone had slit the flesh under his chin, and he would fall asleep. The workers upstairs, in the shop, would sing the songs from Dasca.

But Kovalski was not the owner of the printing shop, only the manager, a hired employee like the rest of the workers. The real boss, the Number One, was Yasha Beerbrayer.

SO CHAN WING-YU, Stakhai, worked in the North China Press. In the beginning he had to clean the toilet every morning, carry away the buckets of offal, sweep the halls, move the dirt and dust from one corner of the shop to the other, go on errands, run out for cigarettes for Kovalski, bring *shiao-shin* for the older workers. After their labors the workers would gather in the corners, drink *shiao-shin*, and nibble on salted nuts. The odor of the drinks would hang in the air like the smell of gasoline, and together with the stench which came through the open door of the toilet gave Stakhai a headache, a sickening feel-

ing of nausea. Impatiently he would wait until the last worker had left the shop and he could, at last, lock the door. "Stakhai, don't forget to lock the doors," Kovalski would always say before leaving.

When he reached home it would be late, the streets dark. His mother would send him with the thermos bottles to the hot-water shop, and later he would listen submissively to her nagging complaints about their hardships, about the rising prices, and about how she could buy almost nothing in the markets with her husband's and son's salary.

It was the time of the Japanese occupation, and instead of food everyone had a ration card. True, it said on the card where you could get rice, flour, and brown sugar. But even if you stood in line all night in front of one of the ration shops, you would end up with very little. Dawn brought the Chinese policemen to keep order. Wielding their clubs, they would beat those who had stood all night in line, subdue their pushing and jostling. Then the strong-arm men sent by the black market operators would appear and would elbow and punch their way to the head of the queue. And those who were at the end of the line would return, empty-handed.

Thus Stakhai's mother, a tiny and haggard woman, was forced to buy everything on the open market. On the open market,

however, prices kept pace with the rise of the American dollar on the illegal exchange conducted on Szechuen Road, Chusan Road, or over the tables of the Mars Café. Stakhai and his father received their salaries in C.R.B., the notes issued by the pro-Japanese China Reserve Bank. But their salaries never rose — “To avoid inflation,” Beerbrayer said, and Beerbrayer was the real boss, the Number One, of the North China Press.

IN THE SUMMER, when the days became longer and hotter, the shop was an airless box. Sweat ran off the backs of the compositors, trickled down their naked chests. The printing press downstairs boomed and heaved. Dust tickled the nostrils, and the odor from the toilet was like burned horsemeat.

Outside, schoolboys of Stakhai's age, their classes over, pedaled about on bicycles, went in groups on picnics to the woods of Hanjao, to the open sea in Woosung. They were gay and free, while he dragged his feet to the rue Bourgeat every day, carried the buckets, ran out for cigarets (“You overpaid, Stakhai. Yesterday I bought them cheaper”), for vodka, for *shiao-shin*.

Once a visitor came to the printing shop, a poet. His name was Victor Yakovlenko and he wrote poems in the Shanghai Soviet paper, *Novaya Zizn*, “New Life.” His poems were entitled “An Ode to Comrade

Stalin,” “Marching Red Army Men,” “The Song of the Ukrainian Plain.” In secrecy, however, for himself, he wrote intimate, deeply personal poetry, songs about love and death and about his own sick lungs. This Victor Yakovlenko was a strange man, with a skeletal build, curly hair, and sparkling eyes that looked like two precious stones. He walked with a stoop, his head thrust forward; he spoke to himself, drank vodka alone, in front of a mirror, and for his intimate friends would recite some of the gentle Russian poets — Balmont, Blok, Akhmatovna, and Yessenin. He stuttered, spoke rapidly as if in a race with his thoughts. He wanted to go to Russia, the land he had never seen. After the revolution, when Victor was still a child, his father, a Czarist official, had taken him to Harbin and from there to Tientsin and Shanghai. Victor wanted to go back to Russia, and at the same time he was afraid of this Fatherland of his just as one is afraid of a monster, a gigantic soulless robot. Victor loved death and was afraid of it. He thought that no one in Russia would ever read or understand his songs, the real ones, the very personal ones. “They don’t understand real poetry over there, only such things as I write for the paper. In Russia they are all soldiers, and soldiers like the sound of marches. I am not a soldier. . . .”

Victor Yakovlenko spoke a lot



and not always consistently. He spoke with Stakhai when Stakhai brought him the galley for proof-reading. He lived in an attic on the Route Vallon, and his room was littered with papers, books, pencils, shirts and trousers, and you could smell the evaporated vodka, unaired, sweat-soaked bedding, and the bugs. Stakhai and Victor became friends.

"Have you ever heard, Stakhai, about the *Pa-Lu*, the Eighth Route Army? Have you ever heard about Mao Tse-tung, the Chinese Lenin. . . ? Ah, you did not hear. So, I will tell you. . . . Lenin was the poet of the Russian Revolution, Stalin is the soldier. I am no soldier, I despise soldiers just as the Chinese do. Mao Tse-tung, however, the leader of the Chinese Revolution, is a soldier and a poet. This is a wonderful combination, it is exalted. Just imagine how Shanghai will look, how the world will look, when the poets in arms shall have won. What do you get out of your present life, Stakhai?"

WHEN STAKHAI was fifteen, according to the Chinese count, the war ended. On Yasha Beerbrayer's order, Kovalski hung out a flag in front of the shop. Instead of the former C.R.B., the workers now received their salaries in the new C.N.C., the Chinese National Currency. But it still was not enough — the price of food, just as before, followed the price of the American

dollar which was traded on Szechuen Road, on Chusan Road, and over the tables of the Mars Café. "If you ask for higher wages, you will disturb the postwar economy of the Chinese National Government," Yasha Beerbrayer said to his Chinese workers.

These were troubled times: students paraded through the streets, demonstrations took place in front of the Soviet Consulate ("We want back Dairen"), in front of the British Consulate ("We want Hong Kong"), and at the Quai de France, at the gates of the French Legation ("Don't meddle in the affairs of the former Concession"). And, in spite of all precautions, strikes broke out: students went out on strike, the longshoremen went on strike, the streetcar workers went on strike, and once even the gravediggers in the cemeteries went out on strike. And for the first time in the existence of the North China Press, the printers and compositors struck. They demanded higher wages, a *pikul* of rice every second week, they demanded better treatment from Kovalski, the manager — he must not shout and curse at them, not even in Russian.

Vasili, Ivan, Kuzma, and Stakhai went with a delegation to Yasha Beerbrayer. He lived in a white villa on the periphery of the former French Concession, on a sun-drenched, wide, and quiet avenue. The *amah* opened the door,

was frightened by the delegates and called the *mishee*. The *mishee*, Madame Beerbrayer, was a young Frenchwoman who disliked Chinese worries and Chinese politics — although from time to time she did accept an invitation to play mah-jong at the charitable parties arranged by Madame Sun Yat-sen. Madame Beerbrayer was frightened by the delegates, she thought they had come to rob, and hysterically called her husband: “Yasha! Yasha!”

Yasha appeared. He had apparently been awakened from his nap. It took a long time before he understood what his workers wanted. He caressed his white hair, rubbed his sleepy blue eyes, stroked his fresh pink cheeks. “Is it really true? They want to strike? They are putting up demands? And to whom? To me? It cannot be, it must be a mistake!”

Didn’t they know — Vasili, Kuzma, Ivan, and Stakhai — didn’t they know that he was a friend of the proletariat? Years ago, in Odessa, as a student he had belonged to an illegal revolutionary circle which had planned the downfall of the Russian Czar. Who could understand the needs of the Chinese proletariat better than he? But unfortunately he could do nothing — it was because of the war, of the gallant struggle of the Generalissimo to establish a sound postwar economy. Besides, if he were to raise the wages of the workers in his

printing shop, he would also have to increase the salaries of those employed in his weaving mill, the coolies of his godown, the clerks of his import-export office. No, he couldn’t make exceptions, it would be unjust.

Yasha Beerbrayer spoke, and the more he spoke the more he felt he was talking to a wall. The Chinese stood with heads lowered, and stubbornly bit their lips. They knew only one thing — more rice, more money. In the shop the other workers were waiting, at home the women waited. More rice, a pikul twice a month, more money.

So Yasha Beerbrayer told them to go home and he would think it over. He would give them an answer through Kovalski the following day.

He did give the answer. During the night gendarmes of the Economic Division of the Shanghai-Woosung garrison arrested Vasili, Kuzma, Ivan, and Stakhai, the four delegates of the striking workers of the North China Press. Strikes were prohibited — to strike was economic sabotage.

These were troubled times.

STAKHAI was soon set free; after all, he was only a child and would have time enough to come to his senses.

But Stakhai did not go back to work. Nor did he go back home to his mother. He went to the railroad station, on North Soochow Road,

and watched the departing trains. One train, crowded and dirty, was about to leave. Peasant women traveling home to their villages carrying rolls of cotton; peddlers with bags full of plastic combs and toothpaste; children with noisy chickens in straw baskets; and more than all, soldiers. Soldiers smelling of sweat and dried mud dozed in the corridors, slept on the benches, sat on the steps, on the roofs, their rifles resting between their knees. The train was crowded, grimy, hot, and suffocating. Its destination was Shantung in northeastern China.

Chan Wing-yu climbed to the roof, his heart pounding. He was going to meet General Chu Teh. He was going to become a soldier of the Chinese People's Army.

He looked down, full of pride, upon the peddlers, the peasant women, the children with the clucking chickens, the tired soldiers. Their faces were haggard and drawn.

The train started. The train was moving to Shantung, to fresh air, to a new life.

ONE DAY, two ships arrived at the port of Shanghai. One was named *Gogol*, the other *Ilyich*. The ships came to transport White Russians who were tired of their long exile. The *Gogol* and the *Ilyich* were to carry them from Shanghai to Vladivostok.

The passengers had already passed through the Chinese Customs Con-

trol, and the representatives of the Soviet Consulate and of the Control Commission had already checked their documents. Yasha Beerbrayer was the leader of the Commission, and with searching eyes he scrutinized the red-covered passports, asked a question, waited for an incriminating answer. The Soviet fatherland could not take chances with its new citizens, with the repatriates, the children of the former enemy. But everything was going smoothly.

M. Rogojin, the old bearded priest of the Russian Orthodox Church, raised the cross and everybody at the pier and on the deck held their breath. The priest blessed the ship, blessed the voyagers, asked God for a calm sea so that the ship would not rock too much, said a prayer for the health of Comrade Stalin.

"Hoo-rah!" shouted the crowd. "Amen," said the pious Russian women, daughters of former Czarist generals and officials. Many of these had worked in the bars of Shanghai, entertained foreign sailors, and now Stalin had generously given absolution, forgiven their old sins, offered them a chance for a new life.

"Hoo-rah!" "Amen."

The orchestra of the Soviet Residents Club struck up the anthem, "*Slavskia otiechestvo*." The red flag was run up the mast, sailors and ships' officers snapped to attention, fingers stiff at their caps, and pas-

sengers and well-wishers raised their clenched fists.

Victor Yakovlenko, the poet, was one of the passengers. He stood behind the microphone and with a hot, vibrating voice, stuttering more than usual from excitement, read a poem. His curly hair blew in the wind, his eyes blazed. "Oh, great Stalin," Victor recited, "you gave me the light . . . the light of a thousand suns. . . ." And when the gathering applauded, Victor flushed. He left the microphone. He felt a bitterness, and at the same time a childish joy.

The last to take leave of the travelers was Yasha Beerbrayer. Unfortunately, he said, he could not come along; unfortunately, he had to stay behind in the capitalist world.

The orchestra struck up again. The ship's whistle sounded.

**I**N MAY, 1949, when Chan Wing-yu, Stakhai, was eighteen, according to the Chinese count, he returned to Shanghai. The heavy rifle hurt his shoulder, his helmet tipped over his eyes, and the dust of the road mixed with the sweat on his brow. The cotton of his uniform stuck to his back. The sun stood high. The blisters on his feet hurt. But it felt good to march in line, to see row on row of rifles far ahead, on the shoulders of his comrades, to see the foot clouts shuffling through the dust. It felt good to be victorious. It felt good not to be alone.

Next day Stakhai went to tell his mother that now everybody was equal, everything belonged to the people, she would have enough rice. But his mother was not at home. A new neighbor — as tiny and as haggard as his mother used to be — told him she had gone to "line up for a *pikul* of rice." She could not possibly get back before evening, and then she must go to the hot-water shop. Stakhai wanted to offer to go for her, but he remembered he must be back in the barracks.

It was almost by chance that he found himself in front of the North China Press. He was feeling just a little disappointed, but the sight of the glorious flag of the Free Chinese Republic waving from a window of the shop lifted his heart. It meant that Yasha Beerbrayer had fled — with his French wife and his loyalty to the "economy of the Chinese National Government."

The day after that Chan Wing-yu, Stakhai, marched with his regiment in the victory parade at the famous race track in Shanghai where Eurasian and Portuguese jockies used to ride swift horses for the amusement of the rich. Banners fluttered, bands played, drums beat, fifes and cymbals sounded. Stakhai's column neared the grandstand. On a podium stood the generals, Chu Teh, Nieh Jung-chen; the Vice Chairman, Liu Shao-chi; the leader, Chou En-lai; the Soviet Ambassador, General N. V. Roshchin; the new mayor of

Greater Shanghai and many officers, civilians, Chinese and foreigners.

Stakhai's column marched in perfect step. A sharp command sounded across the race course, and the ranks straightened. Stronger, stiffer, the tramping feet raised up clouds of dust. A second command rang out, and eyes turned automatically toward the grandstand. Stakhai stared joyously from under his helmet.

In the very front, among the generals, labor heroes, guerrilla leaders, stood Yasha Beerbrayer. His white hair was smoothly combed, and he

wore a light spring suit. He smiled, his blue eyes looking soberly over the heads of the marching columns. Casually, he raised his arm in greeting to the marching mass — as if welcoming an old acquaintance whom he had last seen only yesterday. One of the generals nudged his elbow and pointed into the distance, toward the race track green where tanks had begun to thunder and crawl, pairing slowly, forming columns. Beerbrayer, Stakhai's master, smiled, and raised his arm higher, and waved.

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### ***Good Brothers and Sisters***

BY PONG KO-MING

"Brother, brother, where are you going?"

"To military school, to study how to fight the enemy."

"And why do you fight the enemy?"

"For peace."

"Brother, how splendid you are,

Wearing a big red flower on your chest!

Please tell my brothers and sisters [in the army] that you go first and give me time to study.

But after indoctrination, I will join you in the fight against the enemy, In the fight against the American bandits."

*From LITTLE FRIEND, a periodical and classroom aid used  
in the primary grades in Communist China.*

## ► ► **SPEAKING FRANKLY** ►

C. K. Thomas

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I sat through a movie the action of which took place in a New England mill town. With its usual technical skill, Hollywood set the scene with shots of just such mills and streets as you might see in the Connecticut or Merrimack valleys. Everything looked right. Having myself an interest in the sounds as well as the sights of America, I sat back prepared for some good Yankee speech. What I got from the three principal characters was one very British voice full of mashed potatoes, one Anglo-Irish voice, and one that was trying hard to be British. Here they were, an ingrown Yankee family living under the same roof and getting on one another's nerves, but sounding as if they'd spent all their

lives at opposite ends of the earth, and each several thousand miles from Boston.

It's perfectly true, of course, that you don't have to leave New England to stop sounding like Boston. The Maine coast out-Bostons Boston, but Hartford and Springfield sound more like Albany, New York. There are varieties of Yankee speech, but in the eastern part of New England they at least bear a certain resemblance to one another. Not so in my movie. Hollywood labored on appearances, but forgot the sound effects. It effectively made up the face, but didn't bother to get the wax out of its own ears.

Nor is this an isolated instance. The long-suffering Southerners have alternately laughed and winced at what passes for southern speech in the movies or on the radio. If southern boy maneuvers southern girl out into the moonlight by the magnolia tree and murmurs, "Ah

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*C. K. Thomas, who has written extensively on the American language, is a Professor of Speech at Cornell University and Director of the Cornell Speech Clinic.*

love you, Betty Lou. Ah want you to be mah wife," his pronunciation of the first personal pronoun is supposed to identify him with the Old Plantation, even though the rest of his speech may be pure carpetbagger. Or the occasional dropping of an *r* is supposed to be enough to remind us that we are in North Carolina, not North Dakota.

THE SOUNDS OF AMERICA are as astonishingly different as the sights. The human sounds that come to our ears on Boston Common, in a Louisiana bayou, or on a Wyoming ranch are as varied as the physical surroundings. We take home fairly detailed impressions of how these places look. With a little attention we can also take home reasonably accurate impressions of how they sound. Our ears may not be as efficient as our eyes, but a little use will improve their efficiency. We don't even need to hear very efficiently to notice some of the variations, as for instance that the sidewalks of New Orleans sound very much like the sidewalks of New York when it comes to *bird* and *turn*. (Incidentally, it's not *boid* and *toin*, but something nearer to *buh-eed* and *tuh-een*. The alphabet can't cope with the shadings; you'd better listen.)

Some of the variations, furthermore, are surprisingly consistent. If, for instance, I line up a hundred natives of Atlantic City, I can be

reasonably sure that at least ninety of them will use the vowel of *far* in the first syllables of such words as *foreign* and *forest*. I can be just as sure that at least ninety of a hundred native Clevelanders will use the vowel of *for*. Bellows Falls and Burlington, Vermont, though separated by only a short trip through the Green Mountains, will show the same difference: *fahrest* in Bellows Falls, *fawrest* in Burlington. The Green Mountains were a real barrier to the early settlers; eastern and western Vermont grew up more or less isolated from each other, and their speech had a chance to become different. That early isolation established the difference between coastal and inland speech, and the Green Mountains remain the northern anchor of a speech boundary that runs down into Massachusetts, across the Hudson Valley, southwestward through Pennsylvania, following the southwestward trend of the mountain ranges, down the Ohio Valley, and southwestward again to Texas. East of that line you may expect to hear *fahrest* more often than *fawrest*; west of it the proportions are reversed.

*Forest* is only one example. The two great types of American speech fall on either side of this line. There are, to be sure, many subdivisions, some of them quite noticeable. The New England coast usually declines to pronounce *r* in *far* and *farm*; so does the southern coast from Vir-

ginia to northern Florida. But in between, from Baltimore almost to Jersey City, the *r* is as solid as in Chicago.

Almost everybody in Albany, New York, turns the radio *ahn*; in Albany, Georgia, they turn it *awn*. Here's another boundary. This one runs inland from southern New Jersey, crosses part of southern Pennsylvania, and joins the Vermont-Texas line west of the Pennsylvania mountains. *Rather* is a good rhyme for *father* in New York and several metropolitan areas on the east coast. But in Buffalo and most inland areas it's more likely to rhyme with *gather*. Once in a while it rhymes with *feather* or even *brother*, to the horror of the elegant. In Charleston, South Carolina, a rainy day is almost a *reeny dee*. In Pittsburgh little girls play with their *dawls*, and you frequently can't tell *cot* from *caught* till you hear the rest of the sentence.

AT THIS POINT the apostles of so-called Standard English will be heard muttering about dialects. Dialects are for peasants and other low characters. Cultured people shouldn't be content with anything less than the best English spoken by the best people wherever English is spoken. Use your dictionary. Better yet, say some of them, use a dictionary published in England.

This conception of standard speech is based on mistaken assumptions

about both the uniformity, cultural and physical, of the United States, and the nature of American social status. Take uniformity first. With a hundred and fifty million people spread out over vastly different kinds of real estate, this country doesn't provide the uniformity you might expect in Denmark. Nobody expects the Maine landscape to look like Arizona. Nobody expects Minneapolis to favor the same clothing as New Orleans. Maryland crabs and Colorado mountain trout don't compete much in each other's state, and Louisiana prefers its shrimps to New England boiled dinners. It's naïve to suppose that, because you've grown up on boiled dinners, shrimps and mountain trout are fit only for yokels, and that the bill of fare throughout the nation ought to be as uniform as any of the million copies of one of Bing Crosby's records.

But in matters of speech, we all start life with the notion that we live at the center and not at the edge. What Mom and Pop say is normal human communication. After a while we may broaden our allegiance to include what the neighborhood kids say, but that's not usually an extensive broadening. But let somebody from Jefferson County, Texas, turn up in Jefferson County, New York, and he's immediately tagged with a dialect. He's funny. We don't speak a dialect. Not we, for heaven's sake. *We* speak English. If



we go to Jefferson County, Texas, the natives may even have the bad taste to consider *us* funny.

Some of us carry our hundred-percent-pure English with us and inflict it on the residents of less fortunate places. We don't try to level off the Rockies or raise up mountains on the prairie, but we do try to make Colorado and Kansas accept our notions of pure English. I remember the school teacher from South Dakota who was still trying to reform the speech of Texas, even though after several years of the treatment Texas didn't seem to care.

**I**F the naïve notion that my speech is right, and yours is wrong because it's different, is the obverse of the coin, then the lady elocutionist provides us with the reverse. There is an ideal standard, she tells us, used by cultured people from Edinburgh to Melbourne, and from London to Seattle. Her elocutionary grandmother put the habitat of this ideal speech in Boston, but today she knows it has its origins among the better classes in London and the south of England. So she devotes herself, with great gusto, to propagandizing for what she thinks southern British speech is; and since she is frequently supercharged with personality and revealed truth, she sometimes manages to put us on the defensive. What she fails to notice is that the better speakers of the south British dialect use a considerably

greater variety than her tight little system permits.

What happens to the kid in school? Think of the number of times your high-school English teacher instructed you to say *garahzh*, though the Cadillac dealer, who should have known, called it a *garahdge*. You may not have known that *garahzh* was only a first step in the Anglicizing of a French word, that *garahdge* is a second step, and that some of the English take a big third step and rhyme it with *carriage* (a word, by the way, with a very similar history). Remember, too, when you were told that a tune was not a *toon* but a *tyoon*. You probably didn't know that *tyoon* has become less and less frequent a pronunciation everywhere in this country outside the South.

Now the high-school English teacher is not very much to blame. After all, she's been studying the works of Mr. William Shakespeare and the right place to pin down a comma. She hasn't had time to find out the facts of American usage, and where would she get them anyway? If she thought she got them from the lady elocutionist, the kids would be in for a bad time. The smarter ones would learn to be bilingual: elocutionary in her presence, non-elocutionary elsewhere. The more docile but less discriminating would be likely to wind up with *grahnd* and *fahncy* and the rest of the frightful hodgepodge that all too often char-

acterizes amateur dramatics. If she escapes the elocutionist, the teacher mostly has to rely on a dictionary (often *the* dictionary to her), or on somebody's list of so many thousand words commonly and shudderingly mispronounced. Or she falls back on the unexpressed major premise on which we all occasionally operate: *I* speak English; *you* speak a dialect.

If she relies on a dictionary she may not realize the number and variety of dictionaries on the market today. For many years two or three of them monopolized the field. They were edited in the eastern states; they reflected eastern usage. Often enough they were content to copy their earlier editions and one another, with a minimum of attention to the changing language. Recently, however, the market has been full of new dictionaries, some good, some bad.

One such reports the pronunciation of *orange* with the vowel of *not*, the ordinary pronunciation of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. The same dictionary reports *hurry* with the vowel of *hurt*. This, however, is the inland pronunciation; the Atlantic and Gulf coasts commonly use the vowel of *hut*. To complete the picture, it rhymes *greasy* with *easy*, a pronunciation heard chiefly to the south of the latitude of Philadelphia, and ignores the rhyme with *fleecy*, the customary usage of the northern states. This represents the uniformity of the patchwork quilt; some of

the other dictionaries have a little more consistency.

The variety of dictionaries available in bookstores and cigar stores is such, however, that you can take your pick of several pronunciations and prove your point by waving the appropriate dictionary at the other fellow. That is, if your notion of good speech is that there is one correct pronunciation for every word, and that all other pronunciations are incorrect and, at the very least, likely to lead to social embarrassment.

THE NOTION OF UNIFORMITY in pronunciation is actually the result of social conditions quite different from those of this country. The speech of the south of England acquired its prestige from the prestige of the court life of London, the educational standing of Oxford and Cambridge, and the leadership of an aristocracy that actually led. No such city, no such university, no such class ever came to predominate in this country. Nineteenth-century Boston cast an aura over part of the nation, but the South looked with more favor on Charleston. Harvard (pronounced *Havvad*) had its following, but so had William and Mary (pronounced *Mayry*). General Washington might be an aristocrat, but General Jackson emphatically was not. In short, the centrifugal forces of American life contrasted with the centripetal forces that

centered British life on London and French life on Paris.

We have been that way ever since. The British schoolboy can look to London for a dialect that will be useful to him. The occasional mush-mouthed British actor who can't be understood beyond the third row uses the dialect badly; the British career diplomat generally uses it well. The American schoolboy, in San Diego, Mobile, Boston, Philadelphia, or Minneapolis, can look to no single place and no single dialect. Dialects lie all about him, and some speakers use them well, some badly. We all speak dialects. Neither the patchwork quilt nor the imported model with snob appeal is the best buy. The best American speech is the speech that is considered normal in your own region, whether you live in the Far West, the Deep South, or the New England mill

town from which this essay started out.

Listening to the differences can be fun. When I drive down the Susquehanna Valley from my home in upstate New York I watch for clapboard houses to give way to brick, and for porches to come down to meet the sidewalk. I watch for scrap-ple on the restaurant menus. And I listen for *road* to become something like *ray-ohd*; when I hear it I know I've not only passed the state line, I've passed the York State speech line somewhat farther south. Think how dull it would be if we all looked the same, all lived in the same kind of houses and ate the same food, and all sounded like nationally advertised products. American speech has color and variety. All the efforts of all the lady elocutionists and standard dictionaries in the world won't "purify" it of that color and variety.

# In Our Readers' Opinion

» I do not usually write notes to papers but "Murder Inc. in the Middle East" [June, 1952] deserves high praise. I passed it among my friends and we all agree.

MARGARET SPRENGEL  
ELMHURST, NEW YORK

» I wish to clarify certain misconceptions relating to Atlantic Union in Mr. Pendleton's article, "Another Look at World Federation," in the June MERCURY.

Mr. Pendleton lumps Atlantic Union with various proposals for world government and states that its proponents wish to "federate the free world now." Actually the Atlantic Union Resolution, supported by more than a fourth of each House of Congress, calls for a Convention of only seven Atlantic democracies, plus any others the Convention might decide to invite, at which representatives of their peoples would explore how far federal principles might be applied. Any concrete steps towards Union would require subsequent action of the governments concerned, based upon overwhelming support by their peoples. This Convention, consequently, would involve only seven to perhaps a dozen democracies, not the fifty or more nations which comprise the free world. Mr. Pendleton later quotes a statement by Mr. Will Clayton on the beneficial consequences of "having federated the world," although this statement actually referred to an Atlantic Union.

The Atlantic Union Committee has not stated that "the goal is government of all the world." Individual members, including the one Mr. Pendleton quotes, have expressed that view, but the goal of most members is a Union of free peoples adequate to prevent another world war and promote prosperity and freedom. The principal objective of the Committee is passage of the Resolution outlined above. As General Eisenhower pointed out to Congress in February, 1951, our present danger is caused by our disunity in confronting a unified Communist bloc

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of 700 million people. The Atlantic democracies have far superior industrial strength and resources, but follow divergent foreign and defense policies. Even limited Atlantic Union could eliminate this critical weakness, create a more efficient and less costly defense and enable the peoples of Western Europe to carry their full share of its burdens.

LIVINGSTON HARTLEY  
MEMBER, BOARD OF GOVERNORS,  
ATLANTIC UNION COMMITTEE,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

» I agree with Mr. Hobart Pendleton, "Another Look at World Federation," in the June AMERICAN MERCURY that world government would be not only ineffectual but disastrous if it were simply legislated into being at this time. A government, whether local, national, or world, is a reflection of the people granting it power to govern, and it is no greater than the people. Just as the author fails to grasp the true meaning of world government, he fails to discern the real reason which makes it impossible now. It is one thing to be carried away by a great idea. It is another thing not to have one.

DORTHADELE ARMSTRONG  
DALLAS, TEXAS

» I should like to comment on the delightful sketch, "World of the Unwordly," by Flora R. Schreiber, in your June issue. The author took a dullish people, and with her adroit handling and good humor, brought them to life!

MAY BAUMANN  
JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY

» I have seen the Amish people on the streets of Philadelphia many times, but as Miss Schreiber says in her article, they were just funny people at a distance. She made me understand them, and I am grateful to you for giving me this opportunity.

INGRID CEDERSTROM  
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

» THE MERCURY's review of "My Son John" [June, 1952] inspires some thoughts on the general subject of

naïveté. You have frequently commented on the naïveté of those who accept Communist propaganda, but have now been guilty of some serious naïveté yourselves — namely in thinking (apparently) that the blatant, indiscriminating anti-Communist propaganda in vogue for the past several years could possibly lead to anything else. Persons of the cast of mind of the makers of “My Son John” have long been employed in the cause of anti-Communism. Given their head, they sooner or later reach the point where they feel they can throw off all restraints.

Conservatives have not hesitated to enlist the help of Yahoo-anti-intellectuals, forgetting that this crew, like the Mamelukes, will want to change from servants to masters. There has been little or no protest against this practice, either from THE MERCURY or otherwise.

While it is refreshing to see THE MERCURY come out and say that too much is too much, it must bear its share of responsibility for permitting, if not bringing about, the condition which it now deplors.

GEORGE OLSHAUSEN  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

*We differ sharply with Mr. Olshausen in thinking that most of the “anti-Communist propaganda” of the past several years has been educative rather than “undiscriminating,” arousing a naïve country to the Mameluke danger of Stalinism. The Communist Yahoo, who would have given even hardbitten Swift a turn, remains the greatest menace in the world today. But THE MERCURY will continue to wage war against Yahoos, boobs, and Know-Nothings of whatever stripe, wherever they may raise their unlovely heads. — ED.*

» Hats off to AMERICAN MERCURY for presenting Gordon Shelly and Dave Mazroff's potent and vivid cons-eye view of this witch's brew that is Jackson Prison and its six thousand men. [“City Without Women,” June.]

I have never seen an issue of MERCURY used as a bath mat (the con's sign of disapproval or displeasure of all things readable) a fate met at one time or another by nearly all periodicals; it's a sure sign that your policy of presenting or casting light on the facts “as they lie” pays off.

FRANCISCO DEL SAVIO  
#76613, JACKSON PRISON, MICHIGAN

» I don't like your inadequate story about Doc Beade [July, 1952]. You might have said that before doing missionary work he was president of Redfield College and after giving up this work, he was state attorney at Ft. Yates, N. Dakota. He never married a squaw. He was the most unforgettable character I have ever met. True, he had his childish side. The Bible also says something about becoming like a child. But he had great ability. For his work among the Indians he received \$200 a year. He built his church by himself. It was a good building. His name was A. McG. Beede L.L.D., Ph.D., D.D.

C. A. SHEFFIELD  
DES MOINES, IOWA

» The other night I had a rare treat: I leaned back in my easy chair and listened while the grand-daughter of Doc Beade read me Hilaire du Berrier's story ["The Conversion of Doc Beade"] in the July AMERICAN MERCURY.

Ruth Beede Agar, in fact, is my wife. And Beede is spelled Beede and not Beade.

We were both delighted with the story.

FRANK AGAR, JR.  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

» The esthetic policy of your magazine is to be commended highly; particularly the efforts toward literary criticism. I enjoyed especially the article on "European Fiction" by William Phillips in the July issue.

At a time when literature, as such, is on a substantially lower plane than during the years preceding World War II, objective and scholarly literary criticism is a very welcome contribution.

CLARK WEBB, JR.  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

» I believe THE AMERICAN MERCURY is incorrect in stating in the editorial note on "Uncle August" (page 87, July 1952 issue): "It is the first presentation of this powerful drama in America. . . ."

If my memory serves me right "Miss Julie" was produced as a stage play in a small theater on lower Fifth Avenue about 1917 or 1918, under the direction of one Guido Bruno — a man who befriended many struggling

artists and writers of Greenwich Village from about 1914 to 1920.

As I recall it, the theater was part of the New York City outlet for Edison Phonographs and was used as an auditorium to present Edison recordings to selected audiences. It had a small seating capacity of perhaps 200 to 300 and a small stage. I believe the owner was Charles Edison, son of the inventor and New York sales agent for Edison phonographs and records.

CARL WAGLEY CULPEPPER  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

» The introduction to Stella Andrassy's article "Uncle August" in the July issue of *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* stating that this is the first time that "Miss Julie" has been presented in America is correct inasmuch as the introduction refers to the film presentation of this drama.

It is also true that other film versions were made. As a matter of fact, the first film was made in 1912 and was directed by August Falck. The second silent film version was made in Germany in 1921 with Felix Basch directing, and again the first sound version was made in the Argentine in 1947, under the direction of Mario Soffici, but none of these versions was ever presented in the United States.

MARIO DE VECCHI  
VICE PRESIDENT, TRANS GLOBAL PICTURES, INC.  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

» I read "Uncle August" by Stella Andrassy in your July issue with great interest. I think there are a few mistakes in that article like the statement "the slums had been his early environment." His father was a business man who had a well-known steamship office in Stockholm. Sometimes he was well-to-do and sometimes he lost money, but he was never down in the slums.

When I was living in Stockholm in 1908, I often saw Strindberg taking his early morning walk at Djurgården. He always looked straight ahead and never looked at anybody. But everybody looked at him.

Today the interest for Strindberg, the world's greatest dramatist, is not so great in Sweden. It has been said that the young Swedes refuse to read him. And the newspapers do not care for him. When the American premiere



of his last drama, "The Great Highway," took place in Pasadena, California, some time ago, just one of the half a dozen or more daily papers in Stockholm carried a note about it.

NILS F. SON BROWN  
HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

» I have read the Spanish translation of an article by Serge Fliegers and Sam Boal published by THE AMERICAN MERCURY ["The Biggest Theft in History," April, 1952], in which they accuse the late José Manuel Aleman, ex-Ministry of Public Education, of the biggest theft of the world, amounting to \$174,000,000.00.

As a friend of the late Mr. Aleman, and as a member of his staff during his administration, I want to let you know my most indignant protest against the serie of coarse mendacity and inexactitude written in said article in which they described with flashy colors the functionary of the Government of Dr. Gau as a bunch of gangster, unfit and corrupt citizen. . . .

. . . If you are interested to publish the real history of the famous "Causa 82" in which are involved some of the members of Dr. Gau's Government . . . I can write the real history of the novelistic life of the late José Manuel Aleman because I was a very closed friend of him, tied to him for a very old and sincere friendship.

JULIAN J. RODRIGUEZ  
HAVANA, CUBA

THE MERCURY *welcomes any facts throwing new light on the "Causa 82."* In view of the evidence submitted to our writers during their intensive investigations in Cuba, however, we wonder whether anybody can dispute that Señor Aleman appropriated exactly \$174,241,840.14 from the State Treasury of Cuba.

— ED.

» I am a fiction writer by profession, but even so I have been extremely and pleasantly interested in seeing the AMERICAN MERCURY return to its natural position of leadership in the "thoughtful" group of American periodicals. I have enjoyed reading it for it is a good magazine.

PAUL A. LUNDGREN  
WICHITA, KANSAS

Linnell Jones

# HOW TOP WAS MY SECRET

*A Contribution to Military History*

NOT LONG AGO I happened to catch the movie *Five Fingers*, in which James Mason peddles the plans for the invasion of France to a Nazi functionary, only to have the latter decide they are fakes and throw them away. As an old invasion hand, I realized the picture was hokum rather than history. But while it *didn't* happen, it *could* have happened. Even though the invasion blueprints weren't stolen, they were stealable; if they had been stolen, the Germans would have had ample reason to mistrust them; and as for throwing them away, I almost did it myself. . . .

Let's begin in September, 1943. Sometime during that pleasant month I was inducted into the army and sent to Fort Dix, where a personnel officer told me that because

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*Linnell Jones drafted the War Department's original account of the Normandy invasion. A former newspaperman, he is now working in the theatrical field.*

I held a radio ham license I would be shipped to the Signal Corps. My newspaper background might be adequate for Public Relations, he said, but reporters at best were fifteen cents a dozen. And so, following usual army procedure, I was sent to Camp Barclay, Texas, for training as a medical clerk.

In February, 1944, along with a hundred odd graduates of the clerk school, I was detached from the Medical Corps, which had turned up with more clerks than it could use, and was sent to a replacement depot in England. For two or three weeks we policed the grounds, washed pots and pans, and drank beer in a pub called George's Stag. Finally, three of us with newspaper experience — Hugh Williamson, an easy-does-it Texan from the Dallas AP office, a reporter from the Philadelphia *Bulletin* whose name I forget, and myself — were told to pack our barracks bags and head for London. Our orders read: "The fol-

lowing EM will proceed to Hist Sec ETOUSA. T will be provided by TC."

IN LONDON we were met by a corporal from TC (Transportation Corps), which had provided the T (transportation), and were taken to Hq ETOUSA (European Theater of Operations), located near Marble Arch Station. The corporal explained that Hist Sec stood for Historical Section. He didn't know what it did, but he understood that working for the Section was a pretty good deal. ETOUSA was chicken, but Historical had the reputation of being regular. Furthermore, it was lousy with rank.

We fidgeted around the outer office of Hist Sec for half an hour and were finally interviewed by a captain who explained the purpose of the unit. It developed that teams, usually consisting of one officer and one enlisted man, were assigned to each combat division to preserve historical records, make technical reports, and generally chronicle the goings-on. That is, the officer did; the enlisted man drove the jeep and punched the typewriter.

"You may get to write a few reports yourselves," the captain said, "although frankly we're a little suspicious of reporters. They don't have much of a knack for historical work. I don't mean you fellows make things up, but you're always looking for sensational angles, and

of course we can't have any of that."

Well, driving a jeep was better than scrubbing soup kettles, and Historical seemed like the sort of outfit which, after six months or so, might give a private a Pfc stripe. We were willing enough to accept the Section's churlish attitude toward journalists, although Williamson did ask the captain why we had been excepted from the rule. The captain replied that the prejudice extended only to officers; there was no objection to reporters driving jeeps.

The second day in London we were called into the office of a Captain Ian F. Fraser for a second interview. Captain — later Lieutenant Colonel — Fraser was a species of officer we had not previously met. I think he might be called agreeably civilized, and he was military only to the extent of his well-tailored uniform. He had been a member of the French Department at Columbia University and was the author of several successful French texts. He had an excellent sense of humor, he was a thoroughly competent historian, and might have made a fairish reporter.

"This isn't military procedure," he told us, "but I'm giving you a chance to turn down an assignment. The assignment is the invasion."

I sat up right smart when he said "invasion." The idea of taking notes while wading ashore through a rain of fire, rifle in hand and press

card in helmet, somehow unhinged my lower jaw. I should have known that no army would risk fouling up a major landing by sending a beery leg man ashore in the first wave.

"I've been ordered to get up a team to cover the combat engineer battalions which will go over on D-Day to set up the beach installations," Captain Fraser went on. "As far as I know, I can only take one man, and you might as well have a say in the matter. Take ten minutes and think it over. If any of you would like to come, say so; if you wouldn't, you'll get other assignments."

He left us to discuss the matter among ourselves. The reporter from Philadelphia, a conservative in all ten fingers, decided against the expedition. I don't think he was afraid; he just didn't approve of so radical a project. Williamson and I, a little frightened but greatly intrigued, voted to go. When Captain Fraser returned, he dismissed the *Bulletin* man, asked us a few questions, and said he thought it might be a good idea if he could persuade the Section's commanding officer to let him take both of us along. He phoned the CO, who proved agreeable. It was all settled except who would bring the sandwiches.

AROUND the middle of April, the three of us arrived in the pleasant but temporarily topsyturvy Channel resort of Torquay.

We noticed that GI's, most of them wearing helmets bearing the white arc of the amphibious combat engineers, outnumbered the civilians three to one. Williamson and I jeeped off to a boarding house which the army had stripped down for use as an enlisted men's barracks. The noncom in charge told us that the headquarters outfit we were attached to — the Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group — was still in the process of being set up, but that in army parlance it was a somewhat cockeyed equivalent of the headquarters of an engineering division. He added that the food wasn't too good, but it was better than the soggy fish served by the restaurants in town.

That afternoon we reported to Captain Fraser at the Belgrave Hotel, which was being used as a headquarters for the engineer command. Before the war it had been an attractive place, and the landscaping was still kept up. The inside, however, was as naked as a warehouse, except for the usual beat-up desks. The third floor had been set aside as the Top Secret section. MP's, sleeked down and polished, were as thick as Music Hall attendants. One was even stationed outside the enlisted men's toilet.

With Captain Fraser playing guide, we went on a tour of the building, finally winding up in the office which had been set aside for our three-man detachment — a tiny

four-dollar room on the third floor, apart from the Top Secret section. As army offices went, it was satisfactory, although the higher ranks had appropriated the rooms overlooking the sea. We tested the single typewriter, checked the supply of carbon paper, and went on to the Top Secret office for a going-over by Lieutenant Colonel Vivien Clark, the Group G-2. I almost dislocated my wrist trying to give a military salute. The Colonel overlooked it.

"If you and your men are going to cover the landings," he said to Captain Fraser, "you'd better get familiar with the plan. I suppose you know the general outline."

Captain Fraser said he had a hazy notion.

The Colonel picked up a pencil, pointed to a 1:50,000 map of the Normandy coast on the wall, and sketched in the now famous pattern: the British on the east; two American divisions in the center; and a third American division on the west. "We're supporting the 1st and 29th Divisions on Omaha Beach," Colonel Clark said. "Over on Utah, the 1st Engineer Brigade will back up the 4th Division. Have you got a historical team with the 1st Brigade?"

Captain Fraser said he didn't believe so. Colonel Clark didn't seem to think the invasion would suffer unduly, and went on with his briefing. It would be an early morning landing at low tide, with naval and

air support. The date would be announced later, but you could make a pretty good guess by consulting the tide charts. The Germans, it seemed, had littered the tidal flat in front of the beaches with mined obstacles which, even at normal low tide, had water around their bases. To avoid these obstacles, it was necessary to pick a date when a very low — neap — tide occurred at H-Hour, or 6:30 A.M. There were only two or three such dates during the spring.

That was the general idea, Colonel Clark said. We could get the details from the plans themselves. The master plan was Overlord, but it was too general to do us much good. The specific First Army plan for the American build-up was Neptune. He gave Captain Fraser a copy of Operation Plan Neptune which had been mimeographed and bound, told us not to be afraid to ask questions, and dismissed us.

Captain Fraser led the way back to our office, sat down at the desk, and opened the copy of Neptune.

"Well," he said, "we'd better get to work."

Now, I hardly expect this to be credited by a public accustomed to films in which even matters of minor military secrecy are locked in ten-ton safes and surrounded by machine gun platoons, but by the end of the afternoon Private Williamson and I had in our

heads the outline of the most important military secret of the day. We knew the precise beaches the troops would hit, the approximate numbers and dispositions of those troops, the details of the preliminary air and sea bombardments — everything, in fact, but the date, and we had the formula for approximating that. Also, we were groggy.

As I remember it, we left the Belgrave about five, and walked up the road which runs along the Torquay beach, without exchanging a word. The waterfront was deserted, but we kept going until the hotel was practically out of sight before we sat down on a bench and considered the situation. We quickly agreed that the idea of two six-month privates being taken fresh from KP and latrine duty, and shown the plans for the invasion of France, was too far-fetched to believe, and after talking a long time we came to the conclusion that the odd taste in our mouths was red herring. This alleged invasion must be either a dry run — that is, a training exercise — or a completely phony plan, certain to leak, which had been devised to draw the enemy's attention away from the true invasion area. On the whole, we favored the second supposition, since it would account for the detail in planning, and for Colonel Clark's willingness to discuss the plan in front of two unknown GI's. Suppose we did get loaded in a pub full of spies and

shoot off our faces; it could only help insure the desired result.

Of course, as Williamson, who put nothing past the army, pointed out, there was always a chance that we had blundered into the real thing, and we might as well watch our tongues. And so for a couple of days we slunk around Torquay as if we were being shadowed, and if the mess sergeant as much as asked if we were enjoying the powdered eggs, we thought long and hard before giving him an answer.

IN THE WEEKS which followed, we got to know more of the enlisted men around Group Headquarters and came to realize that we were not the only doubters. There must have been fifty GI's who had access to secret material, and from time to time they would discuss the invasion in general terms, cautiously skirting the material in their own office files. There were three schools of thought:

The most vocal held to the dry-run or training exercise theory, arguing that the climax of our activities would be a mock invasion of Lands End or Wales. The supporters of this notion were not very convincing, but they were loud, since most of them had been on dry runs before. Several had taken part in one exercise during which a German surface craft had caught up with three loaded LST's in the Channel and blown them to bits.

The second school, to which Williamson and I at first subscribed, upheld the red-herring theory. We felt that an invasion was bound to take place in late spring or early summer, and that there wasn't enough time for both a major training operation and the real thing. Ergo, our project must be a decoy.

School number three thought our invasion would be real enough, but believed that units, schedules, and, above all else, the location of the assault would be changed at the last minute. Instead of Normandy, the troops would invade the Pas de Calais, 150 miles to the east, or they might even sail around the Cotentin Peninsula and hit Brittany. These theorists seemed to have the most logic in their arguments, and eventually Williamson and I came around to their way of thinking.

No one — no one! — argued that the plans meant exactly what they said. As it turned out, the plans did mean what they said, but none of us was naïve enough to credit our generals with such lovely simplicity. The fact that so many men of no rank or importance had been entrusted with the secret was enough to convince us that no secret was intended. The gap between KP duty on Sunday and the Top-Secret file on Monday was too wide for us to have any faith in the latter.

And so it was that this strange situation came about: in an important headquarters engaged in pre-

paring for the invasion, a large number of the preparers refused to believe their own plans.

I SAID at the beginning that I almost threw the plans away myself. This statement is accurate enough, although it has in it an element of the kind of truth with which a barker lures his victim into a peep show. At any rate, the episode was never noticed by anyone else in the army, and at the time it went virtually unnoticed by me. Today, as a yarn told over the fourth Martini, it has some of the impact and surprise of a one-inch firecracker that just goes pffzzzzz.

It took place around the end of April. By this time, Captain Fraser had discarded the Historical Section notion that enlisted men were to drive jeeps, if he ever had any such idea. For one thing, I think his opinion of the newspaper fraternity was somewhat higher than that held by Section headquarters in London. For another, our detachment never did get a jeep. At any rate, he decided to split up the work as any sensible city editor would. After the landings, he would stick close to headquarters and cover the top level material, Williamson would take the eastern half of the beach, scheduled to be run by the 6th Brigade, and I would do leg work on the western half, which would be worked by the 5th Brigade. And so I went to work studying the 5th

Brigade plan — and immediately got into trouble trying to figure out the complicated landing schedule of that organization.

One afternoon, quite mixed up, I got out Operation Plan Neptune and on clean white mimeograph paper, with which we were well supplied, drew up simplified charts showing unit landings, assignments, and other pertinent data. I got quite wrapped up in this problem of consolidation and memory, and worked well past the usual quitting time. Captain Fraser and Williamson left, but I still sat there alone in the little office, concentrating on my scratch paper like a raccoon peering into a pool of fish. About 5:30, a major entered the room. I didn't notice him until he said, "Hello, there."

I jumped up and gave him a backhanded salute. He told me there was a briefing scheduled for an office on the second floor, and he needed men to muscle chairs and tables in place. Hop to it.

I stuffed the scratched-up paper in my pocket, checked in the plan at the Top Secret file desk, and followed the officer down to the second floor. It was apparent at once that I was stuck; the major had only managed to round up one other enlisted man, and he had a complete redecorating job in mind. The two of us pushed chairs, pulled tables, pinned up maps, and swept floors for a couple of hours. When we

were finally finished, it was after chow time, and we had to race back to the EM quarters while there were still a couple of plates of stew in the bottom of the pot.

I DON'T REMEMBER what we did after dinner; perhaps we drank beer or played blackjack. We were on British double daylight saving time, and it didn't get dark until nearly eleven, so I guess it must have been around that hour when I started to turn in. First, I emptied my pockets of the day's debris, including the scratch paper I had been working on in the afternoon. As I was about to throw it in the wastebasket, it dawned on me that if the Overlord-Neptune business was legitimate, I had walked out of the headquarters of the Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group with a fairly complete précis of the plan for the invasion of France in my pocket.

I can't say I was particularly startled by this blunder — indeed, I was inclined to blame the whole thing on the major who had taken a man studying the invasion and set him to sweeping floors — but I knew that throwing my scrawls in the basket was a court-martial offense. On the other hand, burning them was out of the question since I was in a room full of double-decker beds, most of them occupied. And so I simply wadded the papers back into my coat pocket and used the coat as a pillow.



An hour or so later we were awakened by air raid sirens — the first we had heard in Torquay. I put on my coat and, with the others, trotted down into the basement where we waited out the raid. I suppose I should have been worried about the possibility of a bomb hitting the former boarding house, killing me, and having some snooper discover the invasion jottings in my pocket, but actually I didn't give a thought to the plans at the time, which was just as well since they were in little danger. In the first place, none of the bombs hit within a thousand feet of us, and in the second place, even a near miss would have destroyed my scribbles quite as effectively as it would have destroyed me. After the all clear had sounded, we discovered that the cellar we were in was filled with twenty-gallon drums of gasoline.

The following morning I took my wads of paper back to the Belgrave and burned them in compliance with regulations. Later, the major was nice enough to tell me we had fixed up the conference room the night before very nicely indeed, and that the briefing had been a success.

AS MAY SLIPPED BY, it became increasingly obvious that something big was in the wind. Troops moved in and out of Torquay and nearby towns, vehicles were water-proofed, and outlandish chunks of concrete and steel, which we recog-

nized as parts of the far shore harbor installations, were seen in trucks and barges. Gradually, we came to the uneasy realization that our fat red herring was changing color, and that Neptune-Overlord was neither a hoax nor a training program. The troop movements and the massing of equipment made it impossible to hide what was going on. Security measures were tightened, but they provided no more concealment than a maternity dress. We consoled ourselves with the belief that at the last minute — probably after the combat troops had embarked — there would be a sudden shift in plan and the scene of the assault would be changed. Even a few days before D-Day, we found it impossible to believe our eyes, ears, and Top Secret files.

The thing which today seems strange to me is that it never occurred to us to ask ourselves the obvious question: If American soldiers with legitimate access to classified information were suspicious of the invasion plan, why shouldn't the Germans be equally suspicious? If the Nazi GHQ should obtain a copy of Neptune or Overlord, why would its staff credit the document any more than we did? Realizing the possibility of hoaxes and last minute changes, would the Germans dare commit a major portion of their forces in France to one limited area, regardless of how specific their information was? If we had thought

to ask ourselves such logical questions, we might have come up with logical answers, although I doubt it. Certainly the Nazis didn't. Days after D-Day, with the British in Bayeux, the Americans in Isigny, and me eating fresh eggs in a Normandy kitchen, Hitler and his aides were still looking for the main assault in the Pas de Calais.

There's probably a moral in all of this, maybe even an important military axiom, but I'm not sure what it is. All I know is that at the end of May our detachment of Hist Sec ETOUSA moved into a marshaling camp with carbines and portables at the ready. A few days later we set out aboard a little LCT which

chugged fitfully across the Channel. Our first view of Normandy came in the evening. A destroyer was lobbing shells inland and at the same time firing its antiaircraft guns at three German planes. I remember being a little surprised to see that we were actually off Omaha Beach, or that Omaha Beach was where the plan said it should be, but I didn't think much about it until later because I was a little scared. There wasn't any need to be. We stayed offshore all night and came in the following day without getting our feet wet. And later, when Williamson and I finally got to write a few reports, we couldn't figure out a single sensational angle.

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### ***"Possible But Hardly Probable"***

» Finally, not only judging by internal evidence, but also by the very name itself, it became apparent that Operation Overlord was planned by the Western Allies to be one of the decisive actions of the war.

I was now quite convinced that I had the answer. Operation Overlord was the code name for the second front.

I immediately sent a signal to Berlin, giving my theory and the reasons that led up to it in detail. A week later I received a laconic reply: "Possible but hardly probable."

So it was not until the early hours of June 6, 1944, when the enormous Anglo-American armada appeared out of the dawn off the Normandy coast, that Germany received final confirmation of that mysterious code word's real meaning.

L. C. MOYZISCH, war-time attaché of the German Embassy in Ankara, in his book, *OPERATION CICERO*, Coward-McCann, 1950.

# FILM

Wallace Markfield

## *The Inauthentic Western*

*Problems on the Prairie*

IN FORMER YEARS, the Western film presented us with a hero whose chief properties were a long face, glacier-cold eyes, an amoeba-like asexuality, two guns never lifted above hip level, and a simple moral code in which the line between good and evil was irremediably fixed. Hard, self-contained, more demigod than man, he walked always under the shadow of violence, ready to burst forth at any moment into rapid and stunning action. Like Owen Wister's *Virginian*, his speech, along with everything else, was stripped down to a hard, intact core: "When you call me that — smile!" But as William S. Hart rode off into his last sunset, nature's noble-

man gave way to the 'sheiks of the saddle' like Tom Mix, Buck Jones, Hoot Gibson, Bob Steele and Ken Maynard, who became famous not only for their dynamic agility — most of them were circus acrobats, athletes, or stuntmen — but for the distinctive elegance of their trappings. They rode horses that had the fantastic qualities of Pegasus, wore silk shirts, emerald-studded chaps, flashy bandanas, and gun belts to match their sombreros.

Despite all their sartorial idiosyncrasies, the films they made presented the uncomplicated universe of the old one-reelers, populated entirely by outlaws and sheriffs, dance-hall girls, tenderfeet, and crooked bankers who announced themselves as clearly as a set of placards. What little there was to be said could be said in movement. As Gilbert Seldes has written: "There was the movement of the covered

*Wallace Markfield, who contributed an article on Hollywood's Social-Realist Hangover ("Sunnyside Down") to our August issue, has written for Hudson Review and various other magazines.*

wagons in a straight line from East to West; there was the encircling movement of the Indians attacking the pioneer; there was the oblique movement of the bad man, and the movement of the sheriff's posse spreading out fanwise to intercept him; there was the march of troops to save the surrounded settlement."

The great achievement of the early Westerns lay in the fact that they used material singularly appropriate to the screen, in a way that was consistently alive and limber, without imitating literature, painting, the theater or any of the other arts. They were based on dime novels or the paper-back serials, and the workings of their plots were as inexorable as a mathematical theorem, permitting only a set number of combinations and permutations till the final moment when the good man and the bad man stalked each other down dusty streets at sunrise. Their very poverty, their absence of anything that was grandiose or irrelevant, enabled them to exist by the force of their own energies and inventiveness; they were able to take sunlight, cattle, horses and guns, and with these make a film. If anything else were needed, there might be a stampede, a roundup, or a stagecoach hurtling off a precipice.

IN COMPARISON, the "new" Western has a strange, inauthentic quality, a pallid cast to its features, as though sick unto death. It seems to

be the product of men who have a basic contempt for the genre, who must disguise and distort it into a sickening parody that converts Custer's Last Stand into a lesson on race relations and makes a band of train robbers symbolize society's persecution of the unorthodox. It has a slick, high-powered realistic surface, an air of profound seriousness and maturity at all times. Upending the old formulas, it addresses itself to a series of overwhelming questions: What happens to the gunfighter when he's no longer fast on the draw? How about the Indian who believes in peace? And the cowboy when he's unemployed? Is it right for the cattle king to squeeze out the small rancher? Lurking in every frame is the cold, anesthetic hand of social constructiveness, stripping the Western of everything that was once true and pleasurable and sending it forth as a ritual sacrifice to the public good.

Perhaps the earliest attempt to raise the level of the Western to "high" art was *The Covered Wagon*, whose grimy pioneers were endowed with the glamour and respectability of history. Forsaking a plot line which had not changed substantially since *The Great Train Robbery*, *The Covered Wagon* concentrated with a rapacious zeal on long, panoramic shots of sky and earth, dusty wagon trains, endless streams of cattle fording swollen rivers, sporadically interrupted by Indian fights, stampedes, dust storms, and a mawkish romance

featuring a collegiate-type hero and a heroine primmer and more immaculate than Fenimore Cooper's White Lily. One of the most over-rated films of all time, *The Covered Wagon* is memorable only because it represented Hollywood's first stumbling effort to convert the Western into a cross between an overstuffed Homeric epic and a fluid pastoral ballet.

The appearance of *Stagecoach*, fifteen years later, marked the transition to the sort of Western we have been looking at for the past decade. It was the first Western to attempt social drama, serving up for example a small, depressed prairie village with buildings and streets that matched the pinched, grubby air of their inhabitants. Such touches seemed to hold out an infinite promise and significance that were never forthcoming; you had the feeling that they were offered as mere tokens of earnestness and good purpose, as though to make the best of what was essentially the lowbrow enterprise of turning out Westerns. Directed by John Ford and based on de Maupassant's short story *Boule de Suif*, the film ingeniously sideswiped some of the most formidable conventions of the genre by cramming much of its action into the space of a good-sized hat box, composing each scene like a Daumier canvas and bringing off a set of tricks that were to change the entire syntax of the Western. Most noteworthy of these was the

episode in which Ford shot a cavalry charge behind a cloud of dust that obscured all action; and the final gun battle that cut from the opening barrage to a set of plunging horses and back to the villain stalking triumphant into the bar, making a half-turn, and crumpling into the camera lens like an overturned colossus.

The initial effect of *Stagecoach* was to set Hollywood off on a unique experiment whose ultimate purpose seemed the determination of just how little the Western could be made to move and yet move at all. Pretentious tableaux like De Mille's *Plainsman* and *Union Pacific* helped drain the Western of most of its speed and energy by turning it into a bawdy, muscle-bound hymn to the American past that sported Whitmanesque introductions and sound tracks exploding into the New World Symphony every time a locomotive rumbled. But even De Mille's vulgarity was refreshing when set against such a coy piece as *Destry Rides Again*, which was so static that the rise and fall of Dietrich's eyelashes had the impact of gunshots.

MORE RECENTLY, the Western film has suffered a breakdown of its physical and psychological frontiers before the combined ravages of social significance, sex, and a bizarre self-consciousness that lends a crazy-quilt effect to even the most unpolished, low-budget production.

Perhaps the best example of the latter is a "B" quickie churned out a few years back, starring Randolph Scott as a bleak-faced United States marshal. At the close of the film, when the last villain has been beaten to the draw, Scott stands majestically, smoke still curling from his six-shooter, and takes off (quoting T. S. Eliot!) like an Elizabethan dramatic hero: "This is the way the West ends — not with a bang, but a whimper. . . ." Moreover, the sort of hero you encounter in the new Western is just as unpredictable. He ranges all the way from the lanky, rawboned giant like Rod Cameron, pleasantly at ease with liquor and women, to the fawn-eyed, dimpled post-adolescent whose virility seems highly questionable (Jack Beutel, Audie Murphy). Similarly, such villains as George Macready, Robert Preston, John Ireland, and Mel Ferrer are so loaded with charm that you feel certain their evil ways are the result of a combination of bad luck and an underprivileged childhood.

What seems to be profoundly disturbing the Western lately is an overpowering sense of guilt that forces it into the weirdest gyrations in order to atone for some of the less pleasant aspects of American history. Films like *Dallas*, for example, present a moody, unrelenting hero who opens his mouth only to rail at the horde of bankers, merchants, and manufacturers that razed his

plantation, stripped his cotton fields and brought the Old South to its knees. Again and again, the fact that the North won the Civil War is treated by most of the characters as a sort of historical *faux pas* on the part of a young, predatory capitalism. In general, the script is so loaded with economic determinism that it gives the appearance of being lifted straight from the early works of Charles Beard.

Along with the uprooted southerner, one of the most familiar figures in the Western today is the representative of another lost cause, the gallant redskin. Emerging as a primeval innocent doomed to violation by the sinister, corrupt white man, he is the latest addition to the collection of insulted and injured which testify to Hollywood's new liberalism. As you watch him being blown to bits by Gatling guns and repeating Winchesters in *Tomahawk*, *Broken Arrow*, or *The Battle at Apache Pass*, you're left somehow with the sneaking impression that he's being groomed to take over the throne vacated by the deposed union leader and tenant farmer. The lying, scalping 'injun' has been converted into something even more vicious than his old stereotype — a fantasy whose origin is only in the mind of Hollywood's new social workers.

Even a more traditional Western like *High Noon* suffers from the compulsion to sprinkle its action with pellet-like messages of high

moral purpose. The plot of the picture is a heavily gimmicked affair that could fall to pieces in less expert hands. It presents slightly more than an hour and a half in the life of a frontier marshal; as it opens, he has gotten married and is on the point of turning in his tin star and moving to another town. He learns, however, that a band of killers, led by a man whom he has sent to prison, is scheduled to arrive on the noon train. The main body of the film turns into a solemn plea for civic responsibility as the marshal attempts to beat down the craven, hypocritical resistance of the local citizens and form a posse. To make sure that you don't miss the meaning of a single point, a weird, pseudo-folk ballad is always in the background to provide a tom-tom-like commentary on what is unfolding.

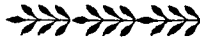
**D**ESPITE the immeasurably greater freedom that prevails today in the choice of theme and treatment, the Western has lost far more than

it has gained. Faulty and ludicrous as it was in the era before the thirties, the Western seemed nevertheless to have a sure, instinctual grasp of the possibilities of its material. It brought the film outdoors, and looked upon nature as a vast storehouse of exciting props; a clump of rocks became a villain's ambush point, a mountain slope a place for horses to scramble down. Whatever moved was useable; everything else was discarded. Reality was summed up as Chase and Pursuit, and the escape valve was turned open to its last thread.

Not only has the new Western forgotten how to move, but it has been pruned and crossbred to the point where it brings forth only monstrous, cinematic hippogriffs. It has taken on all the colors and shapes of our modern anxiety, as contemporary as tomorrow's headline. If things keep up, it's likely that the next dust cloud you'll see on the prairie will turn out to be an atomic mist after all.

Peter Kavanagh

# MY WILD IRISH WEEKLY



SIX MONTHS AGO I returned to Ireland to complete a book I had been writing. When I had finished this work and was about to depart, Patrick Kavanagh, the Irish poet, entreated me to help him establish a weekly newspaper which he had been contemplating for some time. It was to be an intelligent paper, lively and full of ideas. He pointed out that there was a great need in Ireland for such a paper, and that not only was there an audience eager to read it but that he had among his friends many who were only waiting for the opportunity to support such a paper with contributions in cash. I was less enthusiastic for the proposal. I remembered the manner in which Yeats was treated when he attempted to establish the Abbey Theater; I remembered that Joyce

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*Peter Kavanagh, whose brimstone article "Teaching Manners to the Irish" appeared in our March, 1952, issue, has just returned from a sojourn in Dublin.*

described Ireland as an old sow that eats her farrow; that every writer of any talent had to leave Ireland.

But though I was conscious of all this and much more, I was willing to be persuaded that Ireland had changed for the better; in any event it would be well worth the expense and energy involved to establish clearly if Ireland were becoming more enlightened, or, as I believed, more barbarous. Furthermore, the opportunity of examining Irish political and social life while I stood at its very center, appealed to me — why Ireland, noted for its dairy farming, had to import its butter from New Zealand; why no one was getting married; why Irishmen were fleeing the land for the English factories at the rate of 40,000 a year; why we needed an army costing seven million pounds a year; why so many vague institutions were set up, like the Cultural Relations Committee, the Irish News Agency, and so on. Why had a laboring Irishman to pay



when he entered a hospital in spite of the fact that the Irish Hospital Sweepstakes were making millions a year. All these and more were interesting problems. "Very well," I said, "start writing the editorial; we will begin publishing next week." And so began *Kavanagh's Weekly*, a paper which the *Manchester Guardian* recently described as "the brightest bit of journalism to come out of Ireland for a long time . . . a paper from which some English Weeklies might have learned a thing or two."

Patrick Kavanagh then brought me to a pub to meet a wealthy shopkeeper who, it was claimed, was interested in literature and who already had published a literary magazine. There was general enthusiasm when the plan was outlined and the shopkeeper offered to back the magazine financially if I would remain in Ireland and manage it. I was delighted, and proposed that I would share equally in the expenses and furthermore would do all the technical and business work involved. Within a week *Kavanagh's Weekly* was on sale. But the shopkeeper departed and stayed away until the printer's bill was paid.

Then another fellow with more cash than brains called me up; he was a writer, of course, and begged to share the expenses. Contributions from this gentleman came quickly, but none had the name of a bank on it.

In the meantime the second and third issues of the paper were published and were receiving enthusiastic praise from the ordinary reader but not from the political grafters. The government paper, the *Sunday Press*, through its "Night Reporter" had the presumption to attack me. Was I not that dreadful man who had written for that notorious magazine THE AMERICAN MERCURY? Then followed a garbled quotation from THE MERCURY. The reaction of the public was interesting: all copies of THE MERCURY sold out the next morning. We replied to the *Sunday Press*, pointing out that it was yellower than the yellowest Hearst paper; that on one page it had an essay on purity and on the next the picture of a many-times-divorced film slut; that it was attempting to impose on Irish society an alien vulgarity. Furthermore, that the ordinary reporter was an anonymous nonentity whose name or works would interest no one, that he was buried in the hack work of the daily muck heap, and except in very obscene societies seldom forgot his place. Our reply rocked the *Sunday Press*, got the Night Reporter fired, lost them advertising, and almost drove the editor, Mat Feehan, into another political job.

The editor of *Kavanagh's Weekly* was on the phone daily to his "friends." Were they willing to support the paper with cash. Some were very vague in their replies, while

others pretended not to be at home. There was the wealthy "writer" of about fifty stage-Irish novels. He was one of the editor's good friends and admirers. Would he help? He had not brought his check book along; besides, he had to send some money to a poor widow woman in Kerry who had lost her only cow. But he would send money when a check for a story in the *Saturday Evening Post* came through.

SO FAR, I was paying all the bills, and though we were selling about 2,000 copies a week it would be almost two months before any returns came in. Our readers were mostly professional men, civil servants, the hierarchy (searching for heresy), and a few farmers. I drew the editor's attention to our financial position. "Hold on," he told me, "I haven't looked really hard for support from my friends." And so we leave him there sitting on the edge of the bed as he turned the names of his friends over in his mind.

Our paper had a wholesale distributor whose terms were: forty per cent discount, all copies to be given to him on a "sale or return" basis, while he, as I learned later, would sell to his customers only on order. Furthermore, he demanded an advance "censorship" copy each week. This I accepted as part of the indignity which I must endure for going into commerce.

The distributor wrote to our

printer demanding that the latter put up a large amount of cash in case of a libel action. This was too much for me — business instinct or no business instinct. I pointed out to him that he had libeled me by writing to my printer instead of to me as publisher and so creating the impression that I was a man of no financial or moral responsibility. I agreed to settle for an apology. But though the apology was quickly given, the distributor continued to demand a weekly censorship copy.

Even this I was willing to bear. After all, what mattered was the response of our readers to the paper. Our circulation was going up no matter how distribution might be jammed. Our readers were delighted with the satirical articles and the articles exposing political grafters. Our census report on the number of asses in Ireland was very popular. The exposé of the Irish Hospital Sweepstakes as a racket was considered very daring and everyone waited expectantly to see if the publisher was going to be shot. It was well known that the government was searching for some excuse to put the publisher in jail for sedition, but there was no law which could jail a man for inquiring as to who in the government stole the forty million E.C.A. funds.

As I said, the public was delighted with these articles. That was all very well, but those articles were not intended as the important part of the

paper. It seemed to us that the original ideas expressed elsewhere in the weekly were being ignored. This, of course, would not do. We were getting popular. To our surprise, we found that although our readers were very enthusiastic for the paper, scarcely one of them ever wrote us a letter. I then began to write Letters to the Editor to encourage our readers to write similar letters on matters that moved them, but even then there was no response. I was beginning to suspect our readers only bought the weekly so that they might have something to talk about. We were selling 2,000 a week, which meant an estimated reading public of 10,000; how could this be when I knew well that there were no more than 500 intelligent people in the whole country? But though I was suspicious of our readers' reaction, I decided to continue; getting rid of our indiscriminating readers and training an intelligent group could be accomplished later.

We were receiving manuscripts from well-known "writers," but they were all so dull that we were compelled to reject them and continue writing the paper ourselves.

WE NOW RETURN to the editor out on the trail of financial support. Although he was writing about six thousand words a week for the paper, he managed to have enough time to call all those numerous "friends" which he had and also

to pay visits to the advertising agencies and company directors. The business people of Dublin (per square foot the richest city in the world) would surely lend support to our altruistic venture. He was certain he would get an advertisement from Pye Radio because the manager of this company was a culture-lover. All he got was a sweet smile. From the monopoly, Dunlop Rubber Company, he got a similar smile, from Aer Lingus a snarl, from McConnell's and Arks advertising agencies more smiles, and from Wilson Young a slight. But the editor of *Kavanagh's Weekly* had such a deep-seated sentiment for what he called "the essential intelligence and warmth of the Irish mind, particularly the instinct of the women," that he refused to be discouraged.

"Let's put our cards on the table," he said. "People think we are being supported by the Communist Party [their headquarters were right across the street from us], others that we are being supported by the fascists, and still others by the opposition party. Let's explain in a leader that only you are supporting the paper and our wealthy readers will rally around."

The leader was duly written, but the only response was a begging letter to the publisher for some library or other. But the editor refused to accept the situation for what the facts showed it to be. "Let's say we will continue only if we get a thou-

sand pounds," he told me, "that will surely get a reaction." While the edition carrying this information was going through the press something else happened which snapped my patience completely; our printer put on too much censorship pressure. Admittedly, he was the most liberal printer in Ireland, but he was so frightened by the power of Big Business and the pressure of the distributor that he leaned too heavily on his censorship pen.

Even the editor, as he tried to rub the pain out of his back after two hours at the stone, admitted that it was beginning to appear that I was right in the first instance — there was nothing in Ireland except flabby minds that stung like jellyfish when you came close to them. They had no real backbone. Their minds were corrupted by commerce and by listening for generations to political speeches and bad sermons. We both agreed that even if we did receive a thousand pounds we would not continue. It so happened that this promise was not put to the test because we did not receive a thousand or even a hundred. We got about ten pounds. So we prepared our final edition.

I was somewhat angry so we decided to limit the final edition to five hundred copies. When the edition was printed we decided to limit it by fire to one hundred copies. Of this edition only twenty copies were issued to the public — to intelligent friends and to a few libraries. We

returned all the money we received.

Had we continued we could have become a commercial success, but what value would that be? That was not our purpose. We wanted a paper which would be subsidized by a wealthy patron and which would appeal only to the discriminating few. There are no patrons in Ireland for intelligence so we closed down the paper. Patrick Kavanagh closed down his apartment and went to London and I returned to America for, whatever its defects, America has energy. Ireland was never so defeated even under the so-called oppression of the British. It is at the moment one huge racket centered in Dublin. Everyone has fled the rural part of the country — some to the factories of industrial England and the rest to Dublin to join the racket. So it is that the greater Dublin area contains nearly half of the Irish population. The country areas are being taken over by retired English and Indian army officers. You could travel the length and breadth of Ireland without seeing a farmer even with the aid of a telescope. That is why Ireland has to import New Zealand butter. Under the rule of de Valera the whole basis of Irish society has broken down; in the course of the next ten years Ireland will probably be well on the way to its prehistoric barbaric state. Only a revolution can save the country. Had our paper continued we might have achieved just that.

# THE PAPER-COVERED REVOLUTION

A LITERATE EUROPEAN, flushed with that special kind of excitement which is a part of stepping ashore in the United States for the first time, found an immediate let-down last spring when he dropped into a bookstore. The novel about which he had heard so much talk, and which was still, after more than a year, high among the best sellers, was priced at \$4.50. Another of the most popular was \$4.00. A third — one which had already appeared in a magazine with a circulation of more than four million — was \$3.75.

"How do people afford such prices?" he asked. "How can one pay so much for a book he may read once and then forget about? In Europe —"

"I know," sighed the bookseller, interrupting. "In France even great

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*Evan Jones, who contributed a literary letter from Paris to our May, 1952, issue, is now free-lancing in New York City.*

names like François Mauriac are published in paper-bound editions. I know. Almost any book can be bought for as little as a dollar or a dollar and a half." He shrugged, and perhaps he was bored. His store was full of books of which in the course of the year he would sell enough to keep himself in business. It would require more energy than it was worth to continue the discussion.

Leaving the bookshop, the traveler went on to a drugstore where he found not just the pocket-size reprints with which he was familiar, but never-before-published novels selling for as little as a quarter. He asked the question which is occurring to more and more Americans.

"If one new book can be published and sold at a retail price of twenty-five cents, why must other books of no greater length cost three or four dollars?"

The answers are many and interesting. Obviously, it costs more to

manufacture a hard-cover book, with a dust jacket and good quality paper, than it does a "soft" book with a light-weight laminated paper cover, adhesive binding, and thin, inexpensive pages. But the intrinsic question is a deeper one: Why should the majority of books — essentially perishable commodities forgotten by all but their authors in a matter of months — warrant luxury packaging? That packaging largely accounts for book prices being beyond the means of the average reader.

It is a problem which has been torturing the publishing business for years. Rising costs of manufacture lie at the root of the evil, yet in fairness it must be said that the retail prices of books have not increased at the same ratio as the sky-rocketing cost of living. Novels were selling for more than three dollars long before the war, and bookmen have tried hard to keep them from going much higher. The subtle jump in prices which has occurred might never have been felt if it hadn't been demonstrated in the last two years that brand-new writers can be published in pocket editions for as little as twenty-five cents.

THE REVOLUTION BEGAN in the Spring of 1950 when Fawcett Publications, a long-established publisher of dozens of popular magazines, decided that the success of the pocket-size reprints indicated a market for inexpensively bound

books which would be new to all readers. The Fawcett people realized that their venture, called Gold Medal Books, would not have the advantage of previous advertising and word-of-mouth approval which reprint publishers acquire when they contract to do a book, but the Fawcetts counted on their years of experience in distributing magazines. And it was in this experience that they found the pay-off.

Although rising printing and binding costs are important, it is really the ancient, creaking methods of distributing hard-cover books that keep prices high. Most bookstores (and, surprisingly, there are less than 3,000 in the entire country) are still geared to a nineteenth-century America where there was no forty-hour week and few people had leisure for reading. Most bookstores are located off the main avenues of traffic, where they attract few free-spending patrons, and get along on as few as five thousand sales a year. Because of this low volume, the mark-up on each book is high, averaging approximately forty per cent. And it was in examining such figures that publishers like Fawcett found the way to bring prices for original books down to twenty-five and thirty-five cents.

Like the reprint houses, Fawcett reaches the reader through the more than 100,000 drugstores and newsstands which sell magazines. Under this system, there is one sales

point for every 1,500 potential book buyers, instead of the bookstore network of one to 50,000. All pocket-size books are distributed in the same way as periodicals, with a salesman stocking the racks at stipulated intervals, changing the copies regularly to keep the interest of the regular customer. To make continual variety possible, Fawcett publishes eight brand-new novels every month, more than any house in the hard-binding end of the business. It is a big effort and one that has proved that thousands of readers really want inexpensive books.

Although Fawcett is the first contemporary American publisher to make a business of new books in paper bindings, the trend got its real start in England in 1937 when Penguin started putting out original volumes for sixpence — little more than a dime. By February, 1938, the public appetite for such inexpensive editions was thoroughly proved, and Penguin was printing in enormous quantities and with a celerity which has been compared to that of newspapers. In that year a Penguin official flew to Paris to have lunch with the French writer, Genevieve Tabouis, signed a contract, and within three weeks after delivery of the manuscript the house had printed, bound, and sold 250,000 copies of the Tabouis book called *Blackmail or War?* With Woolworth five-and-ten-cent stores as its principal outlet, the English

firm had set the pattern which is now being followed in the United States.

TWO YEARS LATER, in 1939, Pocket Books, Inc., brought the Penguin formula to this country, confining itself to previously published material. In little more than a decade, it achieved a grand total of more than four million sales. Such figures make it clear that publishers can, if they choose, reach a mass audience, just as they also prove that large printings and volume distribution are essential in bringing the cost of books down. Fawcett's minimum press run on all titles, even those of writers appearing in print for the first time, is 200,000 copies. At least this number must be sold or the publisher will lose money — which is interesting when compared to the fact that the average three-dollar book can break even with about 5,000 sales.

It should be remembered that some of the old-line publishers who have experimented with paper-bound editions have not found the effort worthwhile. Simon and Schuster, and Doubleday, two successful and reputable houses, have abandoned, at least for the time being, any attempt to invade the field. Both firms tried publishing paper editions, priced at one dollar, simultaneously with hard-bound copies of the same title. It was an effort at what is called "plus business" —

sales that add to the expected sale of the regular edition rather than detract from it — and the regular bookstore outlets were used. But it was a noble try which failed. Although the dollar editions outsold the more expensive ones — averaging about three to one — the demand was not enough to be profitable. Even more important, the cheap editions brought agonized screams from the bookstores: the old-line retailers said it was just as much work to sell a copy of a dollar book as it was to sell the same title for three dollars, the only difference being that the commission derived from selling the paper editions was less than a third of the usual profit. They also asserted that people who go out to buy books want editions they will be proud to own and can keep permanently in their libraries, and that they are willing to pay for the better bindings.

If books are to be considered luxuries, the booksellers must be considered right in their opinion. The United States is full of free public libraries where anyone can go and borrow a book in a matter of weeks or months after publication. And if one is a diligent reader and is willing to pay a fee, there are thousands of lending libraries where he can rent a relatively new book for about the same price that a pocket-size edition costs. But the fact remains that, with so many titles being published first in hard bindings, the

average person just can't afford to purchase all the new books he would like to read.

With this as a conviction, the paper-cover publishers seem to be proving that the old-line bookseller isn't quite as right as he might be. A traveling book salesman reported from the nation's capital that "unless the mounting cost of producing standard-size editions can be cut, Washington readers will do much of their book buying with loose change at drugstore and newsstand counters. A similar report asserts that "forty per cent of the citizens of Kansas do not have access to libraries. Town after town has no bookstore. People are not reading books because they have no books to buy." The underlying truth is that, even though there may be enough luxury trade to support the expensive hard-cover book business, there is no question about the great numbers of readers who want books at low prices.

**J**UST WHAT these budget-conscious readers are seeking has been the subject of considerable debate. David Dempsey wrote in the *New York Times Book Review* that the trade and reprint publishers have developed completely different audiences. "Why," he asks, "should a novel that has a hard time selling 5,000 copies in hard covers command a sale of 200-300,000 in paper? Price is not the only answer. In this department's opinion, the reprint



house is providing a type of literature that is more akin to the actual lives of men and women who normally look to magazines for their fiction." He does not say, as he might have, that paper editions, reprint and original alike, are on sale across the nation side by side with the magazines, a fact which might account for his deduction that they appeal to periodical readers. Nor does he say that the pocket edition of a book like the *Odyssey* was a best seller in spite of the fact that Homer never had the opportunity of writing a single line for American periodicals.

Here it should be pointed out that the purely reprint phase of the business has never confined itself entirely to lurid or fast-paced stories. The paper-book enthusiast can find Thoreau, Plutarch, Alfred North Whitehead, or John Dewey. For small change he can buy Shakespeare's "Four Great Tragedies" or the Bible, or he can find a spate of inspirational and how-to books. Even the fare in novels is various and by no means confined to past best sellers or bosomy history. Such young and serious writers as Robert Lowry, who has had a good deal of critical acclaim but little financial reward in hard covers, have become economically secure because of pocket reprints of their work. Lowry's *The Wolf That Fed Us*, a collection of short stories which sold less than 4,000 copies when it was first pub-

lished, is reported to have topped 400,000 in paper covers.

The explanation is many-sided and must include mention of the attention-compelling covers, which have aroused the wrath of groups concerning themselves with public morals. The most frequent complaint is that the overemphasis of sex on covers is misleading — witness, over the title of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the stress on "forbidden love" and the picture of a girl with a come-hither look and an "Anti-Sex League" badge. Publishers insist that such covers are necessary, and they seem to agree that designs of this kind are usually more important to sales than either electric titles or authors with famous names. Certainly, thousands of readers buy on eye-appeal alone.

Still, it is interesting how many pocket titles are bought to be kept, and not simply to be thrown away afterwards. More and more collections of paper books can be found in home libraries, and their permanent value has reached the point where retailers are now staging autograph parties.

So marked is the trend that the pocket reprints may soon be subsidizing the hard-cover publishers. It is quite possible that revenue derived from sales of reprint rights has already kept a number of publishers from closing their doors. Most of them now judge incoming manuscripts against their potential

reprint value, counting on the fifty per cent commission the original publisher takes when he sells an author's work to a paper-cover house. And the reprinters are constantly in search of manuscripts which they can accept direct from authors or agents—making their own deals with old-line houses for hard-cover publication in advance of projected paper editions. Hard bindings have the advantage, it is said, of bringing more attention to a book and giving it a greater chance of being treated seriously by reviewers. In other words, there is a feeling that the book columns are read by a lot of people unable to afford three or four dollars for a book, who wait to buy the twenty-five or thirty-five-cent format.

**B**UT THIS IS AN ARGUMENT that is losing some of its merit. *Publisher's Weekly*, the industry's trade journal, said the situation was such "that the present reprinters may be forced to turn increasingly to originals and develop their own authors." An example of this is Popular Library, which, after ten successful years in the reprint business, has scheduled its first original novel, with others in the offing. Its fellow-reprinters also may soon be publishing new writing.

It is significant that the initial lack of interest in paper books on the part of newspaper and magazine critics has changed sufficiently so

that a number of twenty-five-cent books have been discussed in print recently. And the scorn of established authors for first publication in these bindings may be waning to some extent as well. In an article appearing last year, John Steinbeck said that he liked "the whole theory of the twenty-five-cent book." John Faulkner (as serious about his writing as his brother William) has left his old hard-cover publisher; his first original novel for Gold Medal sold almost 700,000 copies, more than all his previous books put together. Faulkner has put himself on record as favoring inexpensive first publication, saying that the cheap editions come "closest to giving the reading public writers' stories. As to books that can be put on shelves and saved, a man is lucky if he finds one of that kind per hundred books he reads."

Whatever the number of published books worth saving may be, the recent Ballantine Books plan seems to be the best scheme yet worked out for the average reader. The new publishing house, organized by Ian Ballantine, former president of Bantam Books, has announced that it will begin simultaneous publication this fall of novels in both hard and soft editions. While the Ballantine paper editions will cost a little more than their competitors—thirty-five cents for volumes averaging 216 pages, and fifty cents for those averaging 420—

perhaps the happiest factor in the firm's program is that hard-cover editions are to retail at \$1.50 and \$2. On sale in both bookshops and drug-stores, Ballantine titles will be available to both those who like to add to their own libraries, and those who want only an evening or two of reading. The Macmillan Company has ventured into the paper-bound original field, too — with its mid-summer publication of *Six Angels at My Back*, a better-than-average first novel by a Virginian named John Bell Clayton. Larger in format than pocket-size books, this laminated-cover novel costs \$1.50 and is a frank experiment "to make available to the widest possible audience a work of fiction of outstanding quality." Macmillan hopes to publish other original works in paper covers.

**T**HOUSANDS of intelligent readers who balk at the cost of hard-cover books are certain to be pleased by such inexpensive editions of original fiction. These same readers have already welcomed enthusiastically a paper-bound collection of miscellaneous original writing. Last April, the enterprising New American Library broke new ground by being the first of the reprint houses to publish, in mass-distributed pocket form, a "little magazine," to quote the publisher's description. Called *New World Writing*, the paper-bound book is a collection of short

fiction and critical essays by young writers, known and unknown. It includes, for instance, a chapter from a novel by Themistocles Hoetis, whose previous publication had been confined to *Zero*, a literary review which the author himself published in 1949 in France and Africa. (The complete Hoetis novel, entitled *The Man Who Went Away*, was issued two months later in hard covers by Pellegrini and Cudahy.) The response which *New World Writing* got has encouraged the publishers to prepare two additional collections. So successful is the venture that the New American Library is seriously considering making *New World Writing* a quarterly in book form.

Following the example set by *New World Writing* is *Discovery*, another paper-covered anthology of young authors scheduled for publication early in 1953.

These are all good signs which make it reasonable to foresee a time when inexpensive publishing will offer much more quality than it does today — a time when the snob appeal attached to hard covers may be minimized so that there will be more quality writing available at prices more readers can afford.

It can be argued that the situation is more one of evolution than of revolution, but such debate is unnecessary. The point is that the Rise of the Paper Covers is a healthy forecast of good things to come.

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# BOOKS

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William Phillips

## *Fifty-Two Down, Forty-Eight To Go*

*A Literary Inventory*

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY is half over. And historians are becoming restless, itching to put it in order, index and evaluate it, for filing beside the nineteenth, eighteenth, and seventeenth centuries. I am, of course, referring to historians of modern society and culture, to those with a feeling for the contemporary, who cannot wait to bring the record up to date, since the earlier periods are exclusively the concern of antiquarians. Unfortunately, we still have another forty-eight years to go; but half a century is better than none, and, already, books covering the field from 1900 to 1950 have begun to roll off the academic assembly line. Judging from publishers' lists, the literary historians are among the most active, which is natural, since literature is generally taken to be most symptomatic of society as a whole.

It is in a way the duty of the critical or philosophical mind to find the cultural pattern and to define the chief moods, problems, and directions of the time. To some extent, this has been done for most of the earlier periods. Though there is considerable disagreement in the reading of the past, a traditional picture of its leading figures and strains has emerged, serving, if not as the last word, at least as a starting point for further revaluation. But what has come to be known as the "modern" period is still undigested, appearing to many people as a chaos of conflicting movements, figures, beliefs, created by intellectual and temperamental differences and by the political turmoil that began with World War I. Even the term "modern," which has become a synonym for "new-fangled," makes us uneasy, as though the spirit of

our culture were born last week, and were still too new for us to decide whether it is a fad or here to stay and thoroughly respectable. It has always given me the weird feeling that time has stopped when Cézanne, for example, whose achievement is part of the history of art in the nineteenth century, is referred to sceptically as "modern," with the implication that he might be a young bohemian, under twenty years of age perhaps, out to shock his elders.

Part of the problem, too, in evaluating the present or the recent past is the lack of a perspective or point of view. As T. S. Eliot pointed out almost thirty years ago, in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent," our sense of the cultural past is determined largely by our creative vision of the present, which is the sum of all our values, moral, esthetic, and social, and of our idea of the kind of art we want to produce or see produced. In this sense, there have been many evaluations of the literature of the twentieth century. However, they have not been made by literary historians, addicted to the encyclopedic approach, but by a number of literary critics writing more modestly about various figures and tendencies in terms of their own values. In fact, this body of critical writing, scattered and piecemeal though it may be, does make up a tradition defining the main lines of force, the basic

tendencies, in the literature of our century.

HENCE MOST CRITICS shy away from the definitive and exhaustive survey, leaving the task to plodding scholars whose information is usually greater than their insight. One bold spirit, however, J. Isaacs (first name withheld), an English critic, has attempted an informal, discursive panorama of modern literature in a series of six talks over the B.B.C., collected now under the imposing title, *An Assessment of Twentieth Century Literature*.<sup>\*</sup> Falling between two stools, the book is neither comprehensive nor selective enough. It is too slapdash for the student and assumes too much for the layman. But it is interesting as an example of what an intelligent and sophisticated observer is up against when he tries to assess modern writing. Isaacs displays an enormous learning—he seems to have read just about everything of any consequence—a respect for quality, an easy familiarity with the best critical work of the period, even some natural wit; in short, all the qualities necessary for a study of the subject except a central thesis to give some shape to the vast number of authors and works referred to, and the ability to discriminate among them. As a result, the essays give the impression of an endless literary parade, with the author

<sup>\*</sup> *British Book Centre*. 188 pp. \$2.00.

darting along the side lines and picking out the highlights.

In this respect, Isaac points up one of the diseases of our time: the informed commentator who lacks the gift of judgment, the expert — we see him in all fields — who with an air of wisdom and inside knowledge gives the public the real dope, yet manages himself to be wrong, or trite, or irrelevant. By some mysterious process I do not understand, the expert, who at best has failed to illuminate us, at worst has misinformed us, continues to dispense his opinions as though his authority were absolute and the audience panting for his latest utterances. In the past, a more homogeneously educated society and a more stable tradition served as a check on self-appointed experts. Today, however, in a period marked by a breakdown of traditional beliefs, we are overrun by experts, some of whom create original errors, others repeat old, watered-down platitudes. And everyone is equally praised as he is packaged for public consumption, so that one has to be himself an expert in any given field to distinguish between genuine achievement, run-of-the-mill performance, and downright fraud.

AS FOR ISAACS, I do not mean to imply that his book is entirely lacking in quality. It contains some rather bright and informed discussions of the “stream of conscious-

ness” in the work of Joyce and Virginia Woolf; Isaacs traces the origins of the technique back to William James, Dostoevsky, Jane Austen, Flaubert, and the movies. Isaacs also treats with some insight the writing of such key figures as W. H. Auden, Franz Kafka, D. H. Lawrence, T. S. Eliot, and Thomas Mann. He properly appreciates the role of the new and experimental, usually fostered by the literary magazines; he traces the rise of the novel to its peaks in modern literature; and he does communicate the feeling of modernity in the literary life of the last fifty years. On the whole, most of the significant authors are cited, and with the appropriate respect lacking in so many half-baked critics posing as muck-rakers. But most of them are passed over too quickly, serving mostly as illustrations of some current or as part of a running literary chitchat. For example, Huxley, Gide, Sanson, Joyce, Hudson, Tolstoy, Broch, Proust, and so on — all lie cosily together in the pages of the book like one big, happy family, waiting for their picture to be taken by the local photographer.

On America, Isaacs is one of the few European critics today who does not go off half-cocked about our literature to prove some political or esthetic notion. He has at least a sober sense of the value of such writers as Henry James, Faulkner, Hemingway, Dos Passos, and he is

informed about the work of Lionel Trilling, Allen Tate, and poets like Cummings, Stevens, and Schwartz. I also find it remarkable that Isaacs is familiar with some of the achievements of literary criticism in this country, which he properly places among the best written today, though he does restrict himself mainly to the school of "new critics." But all the Americans are done over lightly, for quick serving. And, presumably to demonstrate the unimportance of discrimination, he throws in writers like Horace McCoy (the darling of the Europeans), Merle Miller, and Pearl Buck, alongside our important figures. If the American scene does not become as much of a potpourri as the European one, it may be because Isaacs does not know as many minor or inferior American authors.

Similarly, the few leading ideas Isaacs presents indicate a level of sophistication, though they sometimes sound like a digest of advanced thinking. When he says that "everything modern is found in Dostoevsky," Isaacs is making an illuminating if unoriginal observation. His references to the splits in contemporary culture, which have created a vast number of "centers," also reflect the sense of cultural atomization of most social and literary critics. Perhaps Isaacs is at his best in describing the anxious character of the age. "The seventeenth century," he says, "was concerned

with 'reason,' the eighteenth century with 'nature,' and our concern is with 'the human predicament.' Our own preoccupations are shown by the frequency with which we talk of frustration, bewilderment, maladjustment and disintegration, the intensity with which we discuss and are aware of cruelty, violence, and sadism, the all-pervading sense of anxiety, and in the background a feeling of guilt, sin, humiliation and despair." This may be an overstatement of a familiar view, but it does suggest some of the moods prevailing in our art and our thinking, expressed most purely, as Isaacs points out, in figures like Kierkegaard, Kafka, Auden, and T. S. Eliot.

IN THE END, though, Isaacs' characterization of the *Zeitgeist* is just as unsatisfying as his treatment of specific writers, for a catalogue of moods is no more illuminating than a catalogue of books. It is not enough to list the examples of chaos and tension, even though it has become fashionable lately, especially abroad, to tabulate the diseases of our civilization and to predict its early collapse. As we know it, however, literature is not born only of disorder or despair. There is also the urge of the writer to create some moral and esthetic order, if only as an act of the imagination. Writers like Eliot, Kafka, Camus, or Faulkner, for instance, are not simply recorders of disintegration; they have also

been searching for some system of values or some creative principle to integrate and humanize their experience. If we have been floundering, it is perhaps not because we have been offered too few but rather too many panaceas. There has been an overproduction of philosophies of salvation, promising to save both art and society. For some, like T. S. Eliot, the solution is to be found in spirituality and an aristocratic society; for others, the unifying principle has been political; and for many, a return to a simple faith in human possibilities has become a creative idea.

Ultimately, we cannot escape making a choice. Unfortunately, however, it is in keeping with some theories of education merely to trot out the various literary and intellectual alternatives. And, I suppose, it would not be too pessimistic to expect, as the century enters the last lap, a stream of chronicles winding through every twist and turn of the era. The nature of the modern epoch seems to call for constant self-assessment. But I see no reason why, if we must have them, these assessments should look like inventories — as though the century were for sale.

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### ***The Plague***

» Among the drawings of Albrecht Dürer there is a self-portrait in the nude which he sent to his doctor, with an inscription on it: "There, where my finger is pointing, the spot coloured yellow, that's where it hurts." It seems as though all the sensitive writers of to-day are displaying themselves in the nude, saying urgently, on behalf of humanity, as great writers have always done, "That's where it hurts." They are not hiding their agonies bravely, with a pretence of cheerfulness and health, pretending to change the subject, like Boccaccio in his *Decameron*. In any sick society, in any plague city, there are always those who boast that they are well, that they are not infected, that they possess a spiritual talisman which isolates them. If they happen to survive they say "I told you so," and there are many writers to-day who ignore the plague and complain bitterly of what they call "abnormality, morbidity, pessimism, self-pity, and squalor."

J. ISAACS, in AN ASSESSMENT OF TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE, *British Book Centre*, 1952.



Peter Meyer

## *Stalin—and After*

A New Biography

IN A NATION one of whose presidents thought that Stalin could be managed by a policy of concessions and personal charm, and another that Old Joe is a decent fellow but the prisoner of the Politburo, a popular and accurate biography of the Soviet dictator is still something worth having.

Not that there is any real lack of information on the subject. As a matter of fact, all the good biographies of Stalin have been written in the West. In the Soviet prison-house, not only is it impossible to arrive at a realistic evaluation of Stalin's role, even the elementary facts of his life are unknown, all the material having been suppressed and destroyed. If you want to know something about Stalin's life and work, you must consult such biographies as Boris Souvarine's and Leon Trotsky's, Bertram D. Wolfe's *Three Who Made a Revolution*, or the memoirs of Russian refugees and foreign visitors. Thanks to these and other people's work, we know a great deal about Stalin — there is no

excuse for considering him an "enigma."

Louis Fischer's book \* contains nothing new in the way of sociological or political analysis. Nor is it a systematic biography. It is rather a collection of essays, drawing a composite political and personal portrait of the man who rules one half, and is bent on conquering the other half, of the world. There are few facts given which you cannot already find elsewhere; but the judgments are for the most part sound, the descriptions vivid, and you really get some feeling of what the man is like.

Fischer avoids the two pitfalls into which most critics of Stalin fall: the underestimation, on the one hand, of those who are struck by his intellectual poverty, and the awesome respect, on the other, of those who consider him possessed of almost supernatural cunning. Fischer duly notes the great dictator's lack of subtlety, his incomprehension

\* *The Life and Death of Stalin*. Harper. 272 pp. \$3.50.

and secret dislike of theory, his ineptitude as a writer and speaker, and the stupid errors he sometimes commits. But he also acknowledges his energy and stamina, his skill in manipulating individuals and social groups, his patience, and his ruthlessness in exploiting any opportunity. These are the talents of a party boss, reinforced by those of a professional revolutionary and conspirator — and such in fact is Stalin, a professional revolutionary who is now the boss of the Bolsheviks and absolute ruler of the Soviet Union.

IT is impossible to discuss Stalin intelligently without understanding the nature of Soviet society. Stalin both helped to shape that society and is one of its most characteristic products. Fischer describes it well: an exploited working class chained to its machines; a peasantry reduced to serfdom by the kolkhozes; and a hierarchical upper class enjoying monstrous privileges, but fully dependent for these and for life itself on the will and whims of the higher levels of the bureaucracy. A literally murderous competition goes on among individuals in a jungle-like atmosphere of mutual denunciation where pity and compassion are a ridiculous weakness.

Fischer knows that such a society is neither socialist nor capitalist. But it does not help matters to call it feudalism. Industrial and agricultural bondage, in the modern Soviet

form, do not constitute feudalism, which was a traditional system of rights and duties embracing the different estates of medieval European society. Some scholars believe that Russia did not have a real feudalism even in the Middle Ages, her development after the Mongolian invasion going much more in the direction of oriental despotism. The complete subservience of all society to the state, which Mr. Fischer stresses as the main characteristic of the Soviet society, is obviously no feature of feudalism. A system of exploitation and oppression, the Soviet regime necessarily shows similarities to other systems of oppression. But it is a system of oppression *sui generis*, and it is more enlightening to analyze it in terms of itself than to press it into such Procrustean and metaphorical categories as “modern feudalism” or “state capitalism.” It is different from — and worse than — each of these social systems.

Otherwise, Fischer's understanding of the evolution of Soviet society is sound. He is right in saying that while Lenin was a fanatic, Stalin is only interested in the mechanics of power. Lenin was genuinely obsessed by a utopian ideal, even though he resorted to sordid and self-defeating means; whereas Stalin's castle in the air is simply the greatest possible concentration of power in his own hands. There is an interesting quotation to support this

view. Discussing the aims of socialism in December, 1926, Stalin asked and answered a rhetorical question:

What is the economic purpose and economic base of socialism? Is it to create a "heavenly paradise" and general contentment on earth? No, it is not. That is a petty-bourgeois, middle-class conception. . . .

No indeed! Already in 1926, socialism, to Stalin, meant "one unified economic system," "subordination of agriculture to the leadership of socialist industry," and "annihilation of classes" — in a word, totalitarianism. The new ruling class, self-confident, ruthless, and omnipotent, created the world in its own — and Stalin's — image. There was no place for contentment and happiness; the moving force was the grasping after power.

THE BOOK DEALS not only with Stalin's life, but also — perhaps for the sake of a piquant title — with his death, that is, with the consequences that this event might have. Fischer thinks that there will be no intra-party struggle, the succession having been decided in advance. The successor is Beria, chief of the secret police. Since he is a Georgian, he will not be able to reign in his own name, but will have to share the honors with Malenkov, and perhaps also with Molotov, the last "old Bolshevik," who will serve as a figurehead.

This prophecy, it seems to me,

underestimates the crisis that might overwhelm a regime founded on the omnipotence of one man. If Stalin names a successor, installs him publicly, and then retires as a sort of elder statesman, perhaps there would be no fight over the succession. But that is just what Stalin hasn't done, apparently fearing King Lear's fate. It is the murderous competition of his lieutenants that keeps the aging dictator in power. Whenever a likely heir emerges, he is got rid of soon enough, or dies under mysterious circumstances. Kirov, assassinated by a murderer whose intentions were admittedly known to the secret police; Zhdanov, who suddenly perished at the peak of his popularity and power — these are mute witnesses to the dangers of the Number Two spot in Russia.

But how can Stalin confidently choose a successor without installing him in power before his own demise? By a testament? Lenin's testament was of no avail. A piece of paper can be disputed, or matched by another piece of paper, if there is a power apparatus to support the rival claim. Russia has no tradition of Bonapartes, Fischer says. But it certainly has a tradition of false pretenders. A triumvirate is possible for a short period. But all dictatorial triumvirates, history shows, have ended up in the victory of one of the triumvirs. The Soviet leaders need not go back to Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus for this lesson;

they have right before them in the recent past the story of the "troika" — the triumvirate of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Stalin.

THIS IS NOT TO SAY the West should simply wait for a crisis over the succession to bring down the Soviet regime. On the contrary, such a crisis is more likely to occur if the West maintains its strength and takes the political offensive. Mr. Fischer's recommendations in this respect are rather fatuous. He advises us to avoid anger, keep calm, and maintain peace and prosperity. In such an era of peace, he thinks, Stalin's heirs will be compelled to make concessions to the Soviet people's yearning for well-being and liberty.

A pleasant thought, but without a shred of evidence to support it. Mr. Fischer himself cites instances of Stalin beating the war drums and arming at a furious rate when no-

body at all threatened him. And although he does not analyze the economic causes of Soviet expansion, he is aware of their existence.

Tranquility in the world cannot be created unilaterally. It takes two to keep the peace, and if aggression threatens, the costs of defense will necessarily inhibit prosperity and progress. Nobody likes the idea of there being no real peace so long as totalitarian imperialism rules half the world. But, unfortunately, it is so, and the facts cited by the author of *The Life and Death of Stalin* prove it. This does not mean that we must launch a preventive war; there is still a chance that Stalin's empire will collapse under steady economic, diplomatic, and political pressure, supported by military preparedness. But it certainly means that the solution is not simply to "solve our own problems," and wait for the totalitarian threat somehow to vanish by itself.

Serge Fliegers

## *Shifting Sands*

*Turmoil in the Middle East*

THE MIDDLE EAST was singled out by drafters of the Republican Party's 1952 platform as an area in which American foreign policy has been found sadly wanting. There is a reason why Republican policy makers, for the first time, mentioned the Middle East. They fully realized that, having been driven out of most of Asia, the United States will next have to do battle with Communism in the Middle East.

Yet the Middle East is the vaguest of regions to most Americans. The average American businessman, at present, deals less with the Middle East than with any other part of the world. In our colleges, there are fewer courses about the modern Middle East than about any other important area. And there have been more books published about the sea beneath and around us, than about the highly strategic lands that stretch from our Moroccan airbases to the strongly fortified Soviet-Turkish frontier.

Two recent additions to our scant bibliography on the Middle East —

Ray Brock's *Blood, Oil and Sand*\* and Hedley V. Cooke's *Challenge and Response in the Middle East*† — differ widely in approach and treatment. Both, however, are agreed that in order to prevent another Pearl Harbor or Korea, American strength has to be established in the Middle East. But both books are also agreed that such strength can scarcely be built on the shifting and treacherous sands of today's Middle East.

Ray Brock's *Blood, Oil and Sand* makes easy reading; it is a bright patchwork of color and material, dense in one place and thin to the point of transparency in another. Brock has been accused of sensationalism. It is true that he raises a lot of smoke in his book. But then, he often blows it away again to let us have a look at the fire.

He shows clearly, for example, how Communists and followers of the Haj Amin el Husseini, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, plotted to mur-

\* *World*, 256 pp. \$3.50.

† *Harper*, 366 pp. \$4.00.

der pro-Western statesmen in the Middle East. However, his active and well-founded dislike of the Mufti — who is the villain of his book — makes him forget the importance of such pro-Soviet Arab kingpins as Marouf Dawalibi and Dr. Khalil Budayri.

But Brock manages to keep up a fast pace of interest. He seems to be everywhere, in the dark alleys of Ankara, filled, as he puts it in his free-for-all style, "with the casual manure of horses, goats, children, [and] the fetid, lingering stench of old amours," and in the air-conditioned headquarters of our giant Strategic Air Command base at Wheelus Field near Tripoli, only 1,960 air miles away from the crenelated towers of the Kremlin.

He even hops back stateside to refute assertions, made by Egyptian Ambassador Abdul Rahim to an American audience, to the effect that the Grand Mufti is living "in seclusion" in Cairo — it is well known that this busy master of intrigue played an important part in shaping Egypt's recent anti-Western policies and demonstrations.

In his travels, Brock even manages to bend back the geographic delineation of the Middle East to include the Balkans and particularly Yugoslavia, where he deplores our mistake of abandoning Mihailovich in favor of Tito. Like Bogdan Raditsa,\* Brock warns that the arms we are now sending to Yugoslavia in in-

creasing quantities may one day be turned against us.

Hedley V. Cooke, in his *Challenge and Response in the Middle East*, shows a more modest approach to the political, economic, and geographic verities of the Middle East. At the very outset, he performs a useful service by delineating the territory known as the Middle East. Cooke very reasonably defines it as the territory once held by the Ottoman Empire, plus Iran. Today, this includes Iran, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.

These countries today face the challenge of hunger, misery, and disease. According to Arnold Toynbee, certain communities faced with a common challenge are apt to succumb, while others, through a process of Withdrawal-and-Return, are able to survive.

At present, the states of the Middle East are either in the process of Withdrawal, or in the process of succumbing. Their living standards, for example, are lower today than they were in 1919 — an almost incredible situation.

Dr. Cooke, an economist with consular experience in Palestine and Turkey, examines the question of whether tragedy in the Middle East can be avoided by projects designed to increase the general living standards of the people of that area. He

\* See "What Price Tito?", THE AMERICAN MERCURY, May, 1952.

discusses such schemes as Egypt's Five-Year Plan, the Dujayla, Haigh, and National Development Plans in Iraq (which could, in one *coup*, enrich Iraq and provide good land for the Arab refugees of the Palestine war), and the inspired modernization campaign of Mohammed Reza, the Shah of Iran. There is no doubt that most of these schemes are laudable and fine. There is also little doubt that unless a general effort is made at once to better conditions in the Middle East, the present Toynbecan "withdrawal" of the Arab populations may turn into headlong

flight — flight toward the open arms and easy promises of Communism.

But before these plans — which envisage considerable help from the United States — are carried out, we must assure ourselves of the unequivocal support of both the people and the governments of the Middle East. At present, however, they seem to have adopted the attitude of the famous beggar of Gizeli, who squats at the foot of a pyramid, one hand stretched out, palm upwards, while the other hand, hidden behind his back, is balled in a resentful fist.

### ***The Prevailing Trend***

» The shockingly low living standards which prevailed in the Ottoman and Persian empires in 1918 were the product of centuries of decadence and neglect of the common people's needs both by the governmental authorities and by the upper classes in general. Yet it is now abundantly clear . . . that . . . the standard of life has undergone a further marked decline during the period 1919-50! This deterioration has occurred in spite of the remarkable expansion of modern technology and of communications facilitating greatly increased general knowledge of conditions in all parts of the world. Nor have the spectacular oil developments . . . had any observable effect upon the prevailing trend.

HEDLEY V. COOKE, in *CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE IN THE MIDDLE EAST*, Harper, 1952.

# BOOKS IN SHORT

## Linguistic Tory

*Words and Ways of American English.* By Thomas Pyles. Random House. 310 pp. \$3.50.

NOT LONG after this country declared its political independence from Great Britain, a Connecticut schoolmaster declared its linguistic independence. In his *Dissertations on the English Language* (1789), Noah Webster wrote that "as an independent nation, our honor requires us to have a system of our own, in language as well as government." He expected that local causes would "produce, in a course of time, a language in North America as different from the future language of England as the Modern Dutch, Danish, and Swedish are from the German. . . ."

In fact, however, no such "American language" (*pace* Mencken) developed; at most, we may speak, like Professor Pyles, of an "American English." It was, of course, a piece of overweening rationalism to assume, as Webster did in characteristic eighteenth-century fashion, that it was possible by conscious premeditation, by taking thought, to construct a living language. Language is a slow organic growth, and not something you knock together because you've decided there is a need for it. Yet the spirit of the times, of

the New World, extenuates Webster's presumption. After all, a nation was also thought to be the result of an unconscious process of organic growth, and here some Englishmen in North America had sat down and pieced together a Constitution, thus deliberately creating the United States. American civilization, compared with the European, is a rational creation rather than a traditional growth, and this theoretical and self-conscious character is also present in the American's attitude to his language.

The American is a linguistic immigrant and *acquires* his language by study and effort, rather than possessing it with an easy assurance as his birthright. As Professor Pyles says, the cultivated Englishman

is likely to regard the English language as *his* language, [and] it would probably not occur to him to try to find out from a book how he "ought" to pronounce words he has always pronounced or heard pronounced by people of good standing. On the other hand, the American of comparable economic, cultural, and social status is quite likely to assume . . . that the chances are against his saying much of anything correctly on his own, and to desire the authority, not of usage [i.e., tradition], in which he has been taught to have no real faith, but of the dictionary.



Professor Pyles finds this American attitude deplorable; his book is one long protest against Americans' "slavish acceptance" of linguistic authority, embodied in the schoolmaster and schoolmarm and the dictionary. Times have changed and the new academicism is to sneer at academicism; so it comes as no surprise to find schoolmasters deploring the influence on the language of the schoolmaster. The great thing in the academies now is "usage": whatever people — that is, "people of good standing" — habitually say and write, is right. Language is a convention, a set of habits, and is not based on logical or any other principle; rules are arbitrary and ultimately indefensible except on the grounds of custom. So speak the scientists of language.

Now it is true that the schoolmaster and the dictionary long held American English in an iron grip, choking off its spontaneity and naturalness; something like the doctrine of usage had to be advanced to bring the language as it is taught and written closer to the spoken language. (In fact, however, this liberation was not the work of linguists in the academies, but of the American writers of the first half of this century. Without such poets as William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, Edwin Arlington Robinson, and the early T. S. Eliot, and such prose writers as Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, and Sherwood Ander-

son, the language would still be in the grip of the grammarians.) But now the notion of usage has become official cant, and invites attack. It is time to see if a good word can be said for Noah Webster, whose Puritanism, priggishness, and patriotism are treated with such irony in Professor Pyles' smooth academic pages.

The great theoretical difficulty about the doctrine of usage, of course, is the abyss of linguistic relativism which it would seem to open up. If usage is king, how then can there be good usage and bad usage? To this Professor Pyles answers that it is the usage "of persons of assured social position, of sophistication, of culture," the usage of the best writers, which is good. But the circular reasoning here is obvious: for these words only tell us that it is the usage of the best users of the language which is good.

There is no way for the scientist of language to break out of this circle. For one usage is good and another bad for the same reason ultimately that one piece of writing is good and another bad. That is, language, like literature, is ultimately an art, and the judgments we make about it are aesthetic. But the scientist of language, as scientist, is incapable of passing aesthetic judgment.

Actually, of course, Professor Pyles implies a great many aesthetic judgments — it is impossible for the linguist not to — and here I find him

most wanting. Rules, he tells us, are merely the prejudices of grammarians, and quotes approvingly, in defiance of them, this "error" of John Ruskin's: "The false, unnatural, and destructive system is when the bad workman is allowed to offer . . ." I won't engage to say whether Ruskin has here committed an "error" or not, but I do know that this sentence is bad and clumsy writing. The writers whom Professor Pyles holds up as models tell us a great deal about his own taste. Most of them are English, and most of them are dead and safely classic. In this book about American English there is not a single reference to any one of those twentieth-century American writers who have done so much to shape our language and establish the American style. John Galsworthy, that shining light of second-rate English gentility, is called a "distinguished writer," as is E. C. Bentley, the author of *Trent's Last Case* (to show us that the author isn't stuffy). Professor Pyles' own style is what I would call "Anglified mock-vigorous." An example: "*The Dissertations* are a fascinating farrago of the soundest linguistic common sense and the most egregious poppycock."

Prescriptive grammar, as Professor Pyles himself says, implies "that anyone may talk and write as well as anyone else provided he follows the prescriptions laid down by the authority. Good usage was no longer

the prerogative of a hereditary aristocracy; the grammarians had put it within the reach of every man." Doubtless the easy and unself-conscious colloquialism of the English aristocracy was superior to the stilted democratic ideal of the American grammarians. But as in other things, so here, Americans, lacking a native tradition, had to look to reason for their standards. Professor Pyles is a linguistic Tory as it were, and would seem to prefer that we had remained loyal to English English. Noah Webster, though the sun of modern linguistic science hadn't yet arisen to illuminate his darkness, knew better. He knew that America needed an American English, so that its writers and poets might be able to say those specifically American things which they would unfailingly have to say. MARTIN GREENBERG

### Feudal Fun

*How to Travel Incognito.* By Ludwig Bemelmans. Little, Brown and Company. 244 pp. \$3.00. It is not quite certain whether Mr. Bemelmans intended this little volume as humor or satire. In a fanciful dedication he indicates that he set out merely to write "something amusing." He has succeeded in that, incidentally, but in doing so has produced something rather unique — properly neither humor nor satire, but caricature-in-words. This literary caricature, moreover, has the special attributes of Mr. Bemel-

mans' famous drawings. Everything is a little on the slant, somewhat asprawl, at times ludicrously far-fetched.

The caricature is not so much of a single individual, although he exists in the person of "le Comte de St. Cucuface," as of a very real and now almost extinct species — those last remnants of a feudal European aristocracy that have survived capitalism, socialism, and two world wars. They are, on the whole, kindly, generous, realistic, impoverished. They are all, quite naturally, in love with the Middle Ages. They are adept at making themselves, for a time at least, entertaining companions. They will do anything for a friend possessing either money or prestige.

There was no reason on earth why the unassuming Mr. Bemelmans should have been chosen as a friend by a member of this society. He was living appropriately at the Hôtel St. Julien le Pauvre on the Left Bank in Paris. But most inappropriately, he bought a ticket for a first-class compartment on a train from Blois to Paris. There he met St. Cucuface, or "Cucu," as his Long Island hostess had affectionately called him during a sojourn in America. It all ended where Bemelmans was transformed into "le Prince de Bavière" (the Prince of Bavaria) and thereby became le Comte's passcard to that life to which he had been accustomed. The

two explore Paris restaurants (only the best and, of course, on the house), make the most of the favor of an American "Madame l'Ambassadrice," exploit the good graces and hospitality of the stern gatekeeper at the Château de St. Cucuface, the Curé de St. Cucugnan, and the positively Gothic Princess Eulalia Torricelli de St. Cucuface. Throughout the whole saga the motif is the menu — the fish-sauce, the truffles, the champagne.

Mr. Bemelmans' caricature is recommended reading, especially for the European traveler. The clichés are expert, the writing smooth, the drawings ridiculously apt. F. N.

### **The Big Trap**

*A Matter of Conscience.* By Werner Bergengruen. Thames and Hudson. 312 pp. \$3.00

*Heaven Pays No Dividends.* By Richard Kaufmann. Viking. 310 pp. \$3.50

AT A TIME when the mounting insolence of the political and military apologists of the Third Reich is making it harder for the few to face and evaluate the Nazi experience, we can only welcome the publication in this country of Werner Bergengruen's *Der Grosse Tyrann und das Gericht* and Richard Kaufmann's *Der Himmel zahlt keine Zinsen*. Each book confronts us with a major aspect of the German dilemma: Bergengruen's with the

plight of the "inner emigrant," and Kaufmann's with the fate of those who "were never asked whether they *wanted* to do anything." And each book deals with the consequences rather than the causes of the German catastrophe.

Werner Bergengruen, who has been living in Switzerland for the last six years, is an essayist, novelist, and poet of renown. He is one of those German intellectuals who, though they opposed Hitler, remained in Germany to the bitter end — by force of circumstance, or simply because they did not believe that anyone would or could ever try to carry out the *Mein Kampf* philosophy. They watched (often slightly amused) the rise of the fool from Braunau, and thought — as they later privately confessed — that he would run himself and his party into the ground in less than six months. When no such thing happened, Bergengruen, his "subversive" poetry on his hands, was finally forced to go underground (toward the end of the war). He emerged from the German collapse as one of the "inner emigrants"; Nazi Germany's defeat was not his.

Richard Kaufmann, on the other hand — born in 1914 and Bergengruen's junior by some ten years —, left college to find the fool already firmly entrenched in the Reichskanzlei. Inducted into the German Navy in 1939, Kaufmann went through the war and experienced

the total defeat of German arms.

Their personal histories, perhaps, explain why both writers are little concerned with the origins of Nazism: Kaufmann was a mere youth in 1932, and as for Bergengruen and the "inner emigrants" — who can blame a man for not publicly airing his own mistakes? Especially when those mistakes were as complex as those which made a Hitler possible.

That Bergengruen is nevertheless deeply involved with the question of guilt and responsibility is evident from his book, whose title has been sensibly translated as *A Matter Of Conscience*, a better title than the original. It is a powerful, densely written book about "the temptations that beset the mighty and the corruptibility of the unmighty and the threatened," as Bergengruen says in a preamble which bears the significant motto: Lead us not into temptation. But the very fact that it is a historical fable also makes it an evasive book. (Its veiled allegory and archaic style recall Ernst Juenger's *Marble Cliffs*, although Juenger lacks Bergengruen's compassion and Christianity.)

For the princely tyrant (?) who — out of curiosity — turns the small medieval Italian town of Cassano into a trap for the corruptible souls of his subjects (ably assisted by his secret police, affectionately called by him his "fisher of men") is an intellectual usurper, a man of

character, force, and nobility. A man who, in the end, when everybody is deeply entangled in guilt as a result of his scheme, is willing to admit his own responsibility.

But Bergengruen, as he himself states it, only sought

to diminish our faith in the perfection of man. Perhaps, so that the faith in the imperfection of man may take its place; for in nothing other can our perfection consist than in this very faith.

A humble undertaking that perhaps best illustrates the dilemma of the conscience-stricken "inner emigrant," who knows that nobody gets out of the trap without having incurred his share of guilt.

Richard Kaufmann, on the other hand, a journalist by training, tries — not always successfully — to look at the fate of his generation with a slightly ironical eye. His hero, a young man named Stamm, does not worry much about the question of guilt. Somewhat innocently ("Once upon a time I was very happy") he stumbles into the trap. His lack of initiative loses him the chances he has of leaving the country; he rides along through the "victorious years" running his little racket in German-occupied Paris.

And he freezes and bleeds through the retreat from Russia, till he ends up strolling aimlessly through Western Germany.

No one ever asked me whether I wanted to do anything; I've always had to do it — sometimes because it was the law, sometimes because it was tradition, and sometimes because I was just told to do it. Anyway, I always did it. If I hadn't done it I'd only have done something else, and perhaps that might have been even worse. I don't believe a cross in a cemetery decides whether you go to heaven. . . . I don't believe in causal connections. I only believe that things grow, and that the wise man lets them grow in their own way. . . . I don't believe in anything except the big whales, who swim all together into a trap and die in it because they want to. They don't want to be parted from one another, and so they die.

In its honest, if often superficial and slightly melodramatic approach, *Heaven Pays No Dividends* is perhaps one of the more illuminating books to come out of Germany. Together with Bergengruen's fable, it contributes to a fuller understanding of Germany under the Nazi regime. That, in itself, is an accomplishment.

GUNTHER STUHLMANN

Down to Earth



## THE Hiss-Chambers BIRD

Alan Devoe

IN SUCH A MOMENT as this of the world's history, a naturalist is sometimes made to feel almost absurdly cut off from the contemporary.

What will the Soviet Union do next? Who will be elected President? How large an air force should the United States have? How ought the income tax to be revised? What about the hydrogen bomb? All this tumult of excitement and anxiety surges and swirls around our days; and behold, here sits the naturalist on his same old swamp tussock or in the sun-dappled thicket of his same old hedgerow, contemplating his same foxes and woodchucks and chickadees, and writing his same kind of observations and meditations as ever.

Frankly, it sometimes strikes him that he and his work must appear remarkably like an irrelevance.

Very deep down, of course, he is

lastingly persuaded that foxes and woodchucks are not trivial, and that the original basic human situation — man on his earth, with his fellow-creatures around him, as in the creation-scene that dates from the beginning and is in a profound sense to last until the end — is at least as consequential a thing to consider as the immediate disposition of tideland oil or the current strategy of the Dixiecrats. If he were not so persuaded, incurably bone-deep, he would study and write about something else. But, as I say, his preoccupation does make him sometimes feel foolish and rather out-of-things. As he addresses himself to his typewriter, to compose a fresh article or start a new book, his eye lights on the screaming headlines of the day's paper. Terror in the Middle East. Up roar in domestic politics. Hell let loose in Europe. Frightfulness in Africa. Black scandal in

Washington, in Manhattan, in Chicago, in Los Angeles. It takes a certain iron of spirit, and conviction in the marrow, to roll the sheet of paper serenely into place and begin: "When in September the bobolinks are traveling now in migration. . . ." I doubt whether there is any naturalist, with an awareness larger than the tiniest, who is able to do it without occasional secret qualms which whisper to him that his nature-concern, today, is as out of place as a dinosaur in a plastics factory.

There is accordingly a peculiar and rare delight for a naturalist when there comes up, in the headline blare, something to which his thicket-knowings and woods-informations turn out to be sharply and directly relevant.

The other day, on an excursion away from the hundred-and-some acres of woods and fields that are my customary naturalist's habitat, I was in a great eastern city and, as it happened, in a large bookstore. When I had picked out a couple of volumes I wanted, and handed them to a clerk with directions as to where they were please to be sent, a light broke upon his face.

"Why, this is wonderful," he said. "As a matter of fact, I had been intending to write you a letter. You are the man who can tell me what I want to know about the Hiss-Chambers case."

"I am?" I said dubiously, suspecting he had probably misunder-

stood my name and confused me with someone in the Justice Department or the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

"Why surely. I have read nearly everything about that case, and I simply can't find out the thing I want to know. Will you tell me please: What is a prothonotary warbler?"

AND so, this month, the "Down to Earth" department is suddenly tied to great events of mid-century history. Hundreds upon hundreds of articles have been written about the Hiss case, examining it from almost every imaginable political and legal angle. Mr. Whittaker Chambers' vast book, *Witness*, which tells the whole story minutely in his own way, has in recent months been one of the most extensively discussed best sellers of years. Just about everybody from Alistair Cooke to Sidney Hook has had a say about Whittaker Chambers and Alger Hiss, and about the Deeper Meanings, and about the issues of Materialism and God and Democracy and Treason, and all the rest. But no one, in all this colossal considering, seems to have had anything to say about the prothonotary warbler.

You remember the warbler?

MR. MANDEL: Did Mr. Hiss have any hobbies?

MR. CHAMBERS: Yes, he did. They both had the same hobby --- amateur ornithologists, bird observers.

They used to get up early in the morning and go to Glen Echo, out the canal, to observe birds. I recall once they saw, to their great excitement, a prothonotary warbler.

MR. MCDOWELL: A very rare specimen?

MR. CHAMBERS: I never saw one. I am also fond of birds.

That was Mr. Chambers testifying before the committee in executive session. Nine days later Mr. Hiss was testifying, and again there was a brief confused flutter of bird wings:

MR. MCDOWELL: Did you ever see a prothonotary warbler?

MR. HISS: I have right here on the Potomac. Do you know that place? . . .

MR. NIXON: Have you ever seen one?

MR. HISS: Did you see it in the same place?

MR. MCDOWELL: I saw one in Arlington.

MR. HISS: They come back and nest in those swamps. Beautiful yellow head, a gorgeous bird. . . .

And with this, the prothonotary warbler went flying, so to speak, out of the committee-room window, and headed back for the Arlington swamplands and was never heard of again.

I do not know, as such countless numbers of pundits seem to have known, everything about the inner depths of the Hiss case. I am not at all sure what parts of what testimony were lies, or just how much guilt attached to whom, or what validity

or invalidity is to be found in this or that passage of the terrible document called *Witness*. I had supposed, until just the other day, that the Hiss case must lie as far outside my field — that sunny field with the woodchucks in it, and the fox den, and the crying killdeer — as do so many other matters, thereby making me feel sometimes rather astray and beside the point. But now I learn from a man in a bookstore the splendid and surprising news that after all I do have something to say upon the case. I can join myself to this *cause célèbre*, destined to roll down the ages, by furnishing a footnote upon its natural history. I know what a prothonotary warbler is.

GORGEOUS" belongs to Alger Hiss's vocabulary, not to mine; but he was right to think that a prothonotary warbler is extraordinarily beautiful. It is a rather large bird, for a warbler, some five and a half inches from beak tip to tail tip and having a wingspread of a little over nine inches. Not only its head, as in Alger Hiss's impression, but its neck and all its underparts are a vivid yellow that verges into flame-orange. This is true not only of the males but also of the females, though their coloring is a little dulled and subdued. A prothonotary warbler, flitting in the sedgy gloom of marshland underbrush, glows and gleams like an ember.



Prothonotary warblers, also called willow warblers or swamp warblers, are primarily haunters of flooded land and have a particular fondness for willow thickets. They breed in what a formal ornithologist thinks of as the Lower Austral Zone, through the South, parts of the Central states and Midwest, and occasionally along river borders into the Upper Austral. "A very rare specimen?" asked Congressman McDowell. Well, that depends. The "very" is perhaps a little strong for Arlington; I am not sure. In New England and the northeast, in the land where I do my home-acre naturalizing, it is hardly strong enough. Prothonotary warblers are so rare here that an observation of this glowing little visitor in our swamp brush goes not only into a naturalist's notebook but into the scientific journals. In a village a few miles away, a prothonotary warbler crashed into a windowpane and was killed on the 28th day of May, 1918. Thirty-four years later, the literature of ornithology still mentions this as with a sense of tragedy.

There are two things about prothonotary warblers sufficiently extraordinary—apart from their rarity outside their limited regular range—to interest almost anyone, whether ornithologist or not (or, like Whittaker Chambers, "also fond of birds"). One is their nests, the other their migration.

Prothonotaries are the only war-

blers of eastern North America that make their nests in holes in trees.

Others of our warblers make a variety of delicate and delightful little nests, woven of fine grasses, plant fibers, bits of shredded bark and plant downs; and it is difficult to think of a "warbler nest" as anything but a little cup of this sort, in a bush or sapling or among the moss and grass stems on the ground. But the prothonotary picks out for its nest site an old woodpecker hole, or some natural hollow or aperture of that sort. Into this it stuffs a large and various filling: moss, leaves, fragments of roots, lichen, strips of bark, almost any kind of soft vegetable material it can pick up in the undergrowth around the marsh or along the stream. When it has filled its tree-cavity nearly to the brim, it rounds out a deep hollow in the accumulation of soft stuffs, occasionally lining this hollow with feathers or fur, and deposits its five or six eggs, white-shelled, spotted irregularly with blotch marks of chestnut and lavender.

The proprietors of this curious warbler nest do little during spring and summer to excite particularly, I suppose, anyone but an ornithologist. Their pre-nesting courting rituals are a pleasant incident, with the male prothonotary spreading his wings and tail and becoming such a quivering blaze of orange-yellow that he seems about to burst into flame. Their songs and calls are

pleasant to hear, with pipings like a sandpiper's and occasional sharp notes like those of water thrushes. But few of the birds called warblers can in fact really warble, and prothonotaries are no exception. Their slight little music might arrest few hearers less bird-responsive than Congressman McDowell. The second outstandingly notable thing about them, after their nests, is their way of flight south.

The prothonotaries make their way to the northwestern part of Florida. Then, instead of flying overland down the length of Florida and island-hopping across the Caribbean, the little sun-blazing birds launch directly out over the blue Gulf of Mexico. They make a nonstop over-sea flight of something like seven

hundred miles. Wintering territory, for most of them, is in Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador.

THE WOODSTOCK TYPEWRITER may or may not have transcribed this or that secret document, under the nervously pounding figures of this or that subsequent liar. I have no idea how much the guests of Mr. Berle may have had to drink one evening. There may or mayn't ever have lived any George Crosley, except the one who perhaps wrote the book of poems in the year 1904, and I have to leave it to someone else (there seem to be plenty) to understand entirely the significance of the Catlett testimony. But that, after all, is what a prothonotary warbler is.

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## SECOND THOUGHTS

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# In Defense of BRITISH IMPERIALISM

Peter Viereck

*I've tried to make it clear to Winston — and the others — that while we are their allies and in it to victory by their side, they must never get the idea that we're in it to help them hang on to the archaic, medieval Empire ideas. — F. D. R. to ELLIOTT R.*

Now that “the Rudyard has ceased to kiple and the Haggards ride no more,” it is time to do justice to a maligned past, to redress the balance in the other direction, to bait not all empire-baiters, but the more facile kind. It is time to out-kiple any Kipling by a dirge for a lost greatness, partly a reverent dirge, partly a grateful one, most of all an ironically nostalgic dirge.

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*History professor and Pulitzer Prize winner in poetry, Dr. Viereck is author of the forthcoming Shame and Glory of the Intellectuals, of which “In Defense of British Imperialism” is a chapter.*

Am asked: “Are you against imperialism in the Egyptian situation of 1952?” Oh yes, I am against imperialism there — against the only imperialism I can observe in that “situation.” Namely, the imperialism of Egyptian aggressors against the prospering, pro-British peoples of the Sudan. If imperialism-baiting is *de rigueur*, why not bait the Egyptian imperialism that is threatening the Sudanese?

The much-maligned British imperial system was the modern Roman Empire, the cement holding together the entire globe. Its weakening meant not more freedom for the globe but less: conquest by the Axis and then by the Cominform. Left to themselves, the unindustrialized colonial peoples are a power vacuum. Today they are frankly admitting

there was more freedom and more humaneness when the vacuum was filled by the British imperialism of Disraeli and Churchill than by the mass-murdering terror of Nazi, Japanese, and Soviet conquerors. So, once before in history, did lawless barbarians on the march destroy the lawful order and unity of civilization by dissolving the Roman Empire.

Racial discrimination and economic exploitation are admittedly execrable. Admittedly, they have been practiced by British and American imperialism, acting not on principle but in defiance of our worthier principles. But these were steadily being abolished by the self-corrective device inherent in Anglo-American imperialism: free parliamentary criticism of our admitted abuses. This self-correcting device, by which Anglo-American imperialist domination of a country leads to dominion status and eventual self-government for that country, is completely lacking in Soviet, Nazi, and Japanese imperialism. Their lack of the self-corrective device, and the reign of terror innate in their system, makes it unjust to equate their imperialism with our Western variety, or even to call both by the same name.

The British crown is an example of how much more is achieved by the dream-nexus of magic than by the cash-nexus of economics. Economically, politically, and legalistically, the function of the crown is

negligible. Psychologically, it is indispensable as the cementer of ethnic and cultural diversity. Churchill did not hesitate to use the unscientific, unprogressive word "magic" in his public statement of February 2, 1952: "The Crown has become the mysterious — indeed, I may say the magic — link, which unites our loosely bound but strongly interwoven Commonwealth of nations, states, and races."

IN 1952, a Hindu with an anti-British past published a book dedicated "to the memory of the British Empire in India," which "made, shaped, and quickened" what was "good and living within us." \* What had happened to cause this change? What made an independent, sensitive Hindu realize the greatness of British imperialism? Most dramatically, there were the 1947 partition riots. These killings could not have happened under British rule; they made even its most oppressive qualities seem like pin pricks. Less dramatic but equally undeniable is the fact that India today has more political prisoners in jail, more newspapers censored by the government, less civil liberties, and less economic prosperity than under the "Western exploiter" at his worst.

The cause of world freedom must be considered also, as well as the de-

\* NIRAD CHANDHURI, AUTOBIOGRAPHY, *New York, Macmillan, 1952.*

cline in Indian freedom and well-being. Has at least the cause of world democracy gained from the British Empire's surrender of its largest possession? The question is answered by citing the following fact: in World War II, two million British Hindu troops fought heroically — and as *volunteers* — on the side of world democracy against aggression. This will not be the case with any independent India in any World War III. Where, for example, are the two million Hindu volunteer troops today in Korea — or two thousand, or twenty — in the new stand of world democracy against aggression?

The old-fashioned Lenin-Hobson view sees Western imperialism as mainly predatory and as leading to violent capitalist market rivalries and inevitable war. This oversimplified view has been refuted once and for all by the more sober and scholarly researches of men like Joseph Schumpeter and Herbert L. Feis. Before again baiting imperialism in standard liberal-Hobson fashion, take a look at Feis's book, *Europe, the World's Banker*.

Moreover, the *only* expanding imperialism today is the Moscow-Peiping Communist empire; and its millions of new colonials are at last learning what real "exploitation" means. All the "capitalist imperialists" today are rapidly contracting the scope of their operations — a euphemism for "clearing out." What little aptitude England's former co-

lonials have for self-government, they owe mostly to imperialism, which gave them more educational and economic progress and more training in public affairs than they ever had received under their native potentates. Instead of rioting against the British imperialists, the Iranians (or Egyptians, etc.) should riot for reservoirs of clean water, for the borrowing of D.D.T. from Wall Street warmongers, and for the return of the British oil companies, who paid their Iranian employees much higher wages than did any of their own fellow-countrymen — plus showing far more respect (lest I seem to overstress material advantages) for their human rights.

THE HISTORIAN D. W. Brogan is no Tory Blimp or imperialist but a democratic liberal. He now has joined the increasing number of scholars who debunk the notion that colonies get nothing except exploitation from Europe. He points out that British dominion, bringing vast gains in self-rule, education, sanitation, industry, and just administration, has vastly benefited them — above all India, "the most important imperial experiment in modern history." \*

For the peoples of Africa and Asia, British imperialism sometimes did mean crass economic exploitation as well as economic develop-

\* D. W. BROGAN, *THE PRICE OF REVOLUTION*, Harper, 1952.

ment (though more of the latter). But this was only the short-run aspect of British imperialism. Its long-run aspect, its most important effect, was not reaction or oppression or prejudice or exploitation, but the replacement of frightfully oppressive tribal tyrannies, especially in Africa, with the British rule of law and humanity. Consider what the introduction of English common law means to people whose only courtroom has been the whims and torture systems of the local Caligula. Today in Asia and in darkest Central Africa, tribal chieftains, wearing the same British wig and gown that their colleagues in London wear, are administering British freedom and British laws to countrymen who would still be slaves of blood sacrifices and caste systems, had imperialism not painted their part of the map pink.

And when British imperialism was (in effect) hounded out by the Boer anti-imperialists, was this exactly a gain for the Brotherhood of Man and the Children of Starvation? Is there anybody in the shamefully oppressed non-white majority of South Africa who does not prefer the Exploiting Englishman back instead? Just ask them.

The British common law is freedom's most fertile soil. It is a law for which the British paid by centuries of "sweat and tears," ever since "castra" became "chester." They paid for it at Hastings and Runny-

mede, at Naseby and Waterloo and Dunkirk. I say such a precious heritage of centuries as the British common law was cheaply and quickly and easily bought for the price of a mere stamp tax or a tea tax, a throat-clearing arrogance here or a trivial snub there. America's gratitude for the priceless gift of this heritage was — the Boston tea party; and Africa and Asia show a similar "gratitude" in their behavior today. For the price of some admittedly annoying tea tax, America has permanently its version of the British Bill of Rights. Indians and Africans have their versions of it. Still other versions of British law and British liberty thrive in Australia and Canada and wherever Communism's enslaved third of the globe has not replaced the free fourth of the Commonwealth.

**W**HAT ABOUT Egyptian claims to illegal unilateral control of the European-built Suez Canal, a claim that violates the existing bilateral agreements? What about the unilateral abrogation of British oil rights in Iran in 1951 (in violation of international law) by a premier who got his job because his agitation helped cause the assassination of his more moderate predecessor?

These events must be judged in the context of world freedom, desperately resisting Communism. Seen in a vacuum, there are many arguments against these remnants of

what looks like an exploiting imperialism (an exploitation without which there would never have been any canal or any oil industry, both built entirely by European vision, European techniques, and European money). But see it not in vacuum but in perspective: the survival of world freedom against ruthless and expanding Communism has a higher priority than the triumph of local freedom (actually, not freedom but nationalism) over some last, tame remnant of a contracting imperialism. The need of world freedom for oil and for strategic waterways takes precedence over chauvinistic local needs. The freedom of Egypt and Iran themselves depends on whether world freedom, their only protector, can resist Soviet world conquest.

Were I an Egyptian or an Iranian, I would say: the freedom of my native land (Egypt, Iran) depends on whether the British have the courage to refuse to surrender freedom's Suez; and this in turn depends on whether America and those Egyptians who know their self-interest have the sense to back England to the hilt. Fantastic folly: that our myth about the supposed meaningfulness of colonial "mass ferment," plus our unjustified Western guilt complex about imperialism, should prevent us from fully backing Churchill's reasonable stand at Suez. Allied naval security, of which we are part, depends on this canal, as it does on Gibraltar and Malta, to *pre-*

*vent war* by restraining Soviet aggression.

Those who by accident control indispensable resources of nature — Iran only one of many — must in a world emergency sacrifice the local part to the world whole. Such resources must be at the disposal of the entire free, non-Communist world. They must not be merely at the disposal of some local gang of backwoods braggadocios, who use the accidental strategicality of their cabbage patch to blackmail loans out of us by threatening to shoot themselves (in other words, by threatening to call in Russia). Resources like Iranian oil and the Suez Canal will simply have to be put out of the reach of local blackmailers and local suicides and placed by the U.N. under a democratic international committee for the good of all.

It is insolent for local despots, who oppress and "exploit" their own people far more than did the ousted British companies, to prate of "freedom from imperialism" and "awakening nationalism." Their spade is a spade; it must be denied its fancy name of "freedom"; it must be called by its rightful name of blackmail. Yet the blackmail succeeds with much of our liberal opinion, which is afraid to condemn anyone who claims, no matter how preposterously, to be victimized by capitalism or imperialism.

A parallel: Hitler at first paralyzed any Western retort to his criminal

violations of Versailles by playing upon the guilt complexes of decent men about the undoubted past injustices worked by Versailles; local despots in Africa and Asia paralyze any Western retort to their irresponsible killings, riotings, and expropriations by playing upon the guilt complexes of decent men about the undoubted past injustices worked by imperialism. The postwar Indonesian riots led to the massacre in cold blood of a large number of helpless Dutch families, a number vastly greater than the total number of Indonesians plus Hindus ever killed by European punitive actions over half a century. Yet I hear no outcry against these brutal killings of Europeans from many liberals stricken with guilt about Western colonialism.

"Millions for defense but not one cent for" — blackmail. I wish America had provided not blackmail but Marines to stand beside our British allies in Suez today; and in the past to nip Hitler in the bud the instant he remilitarized the Rhineland in 1936; and in the future wherever else our survival against Communism requires it.

**THE EMPIRE**" (the phrase can mean only one empire), was it a military convenience, or a Disraelian political flamboyance, or a grubbing economic greed? It was all these things.

But only secondarily. Primarily

and beyond all that, the two words "British Empire" meant: a sense of responsibility toward history. To serve your servants; to rule by self-restraint. It was, for example, the proconsular responsibility that a certain thing should not happen, an evil thing that did happen *after* the Empire's end: the butchering by one another of a half-million Hindus and Moslems . . . burnt alive in their own homes . . . women and children. Would or could this dark deed have happened under the "foreign imperialists"?

Think of those deaths by fire, concretely, one by one, if you still cheer India's "liberation" — in an un-Romed world, cracking apart at the seams, divvied up among barbarians to whom compassion and proconsular moral responsibility are a sign of weakness.\* Think of these deaths if today you still dare have the impertinence to gloat over the decline of what was a blessing to lovers of peace, a blessing to the great and suffering peoples of India, a blessing to all mankind except to those responsibility-burdened islanders who manned it: "The Empire."

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*\* For the Communazi view that compassion, tolerance, and morality are signs of weakness, see the official proclamation of the People's Commissar for Justice in Izvestia, No. 37, Feb. 12, 1936: "In the opinion of liberals and opportunists of all kinds — the stronger a country is, the more lenient it can be to its opponents. . . . No, and again no! The stronger the country is, the mightier it is . . . the more justified are we in taking stern measures against those who disturb our socialist construction."*



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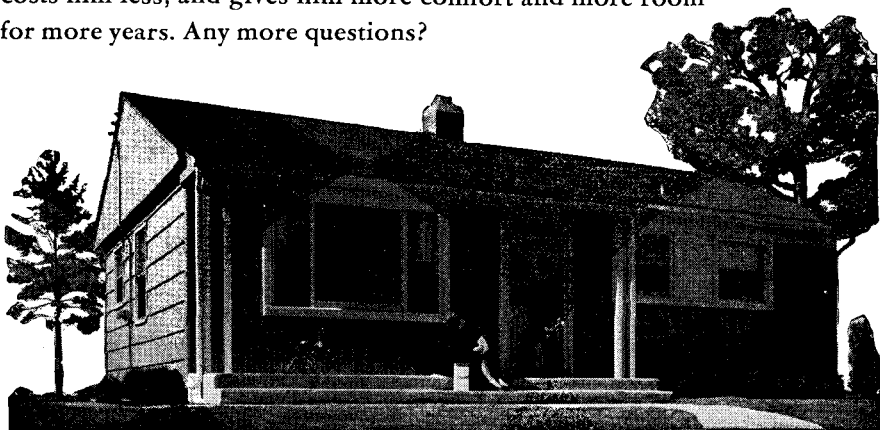
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